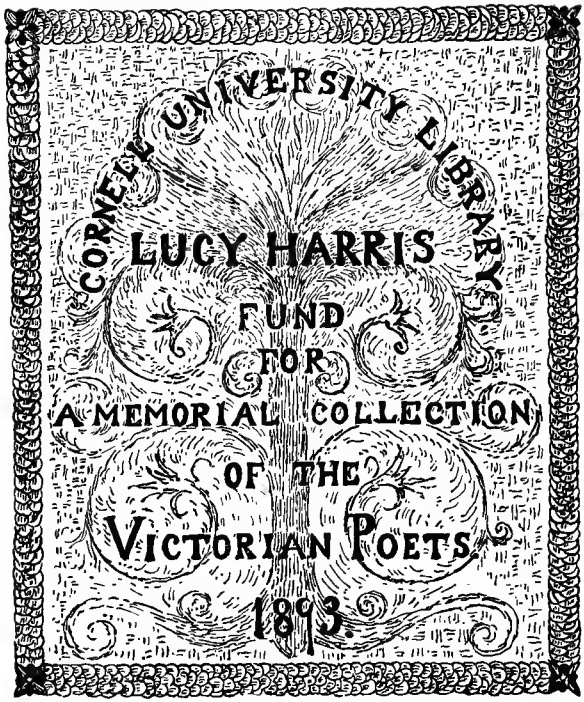
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POEMS

POEMS

BY

JAMES MATHER

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POEMS.

JUNE.

OF all the months of the wide round year
Give me the month of June,
When the lovely and the glad are here,
And the song birds are in tune.

As drops of light from the eye of day
The gowans fleck the lea,
The primrose decks the shady brae,
And the bloom is on the tree.

In dens and glens where waters run
And sing in woodland bowers,
As if a hiding from the sun,
How sweet and gay the flowers!

By Garpol's stream they bloom in shade
As bright as noon-tide day,
O how is it that beauties fade
And pleasant things decay!

On Grennan braes and Molloch's breast
The whin's a crown of gold,
And the yellow broom a waving crest,
Where the cuckoo's tale is told.

The hyacinths in woodland grove
Look up and heaven view,
And of the region that they love
Take on the azure hue.

The hawthorn tree on hill and plain
With song doth morning hail,
Takes on its summer snow again,
And scents the evening gale.

O happy June! thy days are long,
And freighted are thy hours
With treasures rare and humming song,
Like bees among the flowers.

Thy days are long, but they are few,
And fleeting is thy mirth;
As from the grass uplifts the dew,
So June forsakes the earth.

Yet, if thy flight is into heaven,
Who there may follow thee,
From joy no more shall e'er be riven
Through all eternity.

DROCHIL CASTLE.

'TWAS on a breezy day of June,
I stood on Drochil Castle,
When the woods with song were all atune,
And nature held her wassail.

Upon a spur of mountain green,
Be-decked with golden blossom
Of whin and broom with flocks between
This ruin's site is lo'esome.

On either side the Tarth and Lyne
With murmur soft meander,
Till fair in view their waves combine,
And through one fortune wander.

Slow flows the stream in devious way,
That never care doth borrow,
Like foolish men who sell to-day
For shadows of to-morrow.

But Tarth and Lyne one stream become,
And take their fortune rarely,
As 'mid the sleeping hills they roam,
And dream both late and early.

Above where flows each happy stream
In love that's ne'er forsaken,
There Drochil stands, a broken dream
Of night by morn o'ertaken.

The dream of man enthroned in power,
The famous Earl of Morton,
Who thought to build himself a bower
For the afternoon of fortune.

His morn was fair, and bright his noon,
The clouds drove past behind him ;
The glory of a day of June
From future gloom did blind him.

He built his castle broad and strong
Among the peaceful mountains,
That life therein he might prolong,
And drink at silver fountains.

But as the walls were rising high,
With mallet and with hammer,
All open to the gazing sky,
Amid a busy clamour.

Death struck the mighty earl down,
A fell deed and unhandsome;
Stern foes refused his wish to crown,
'Gainst vengeance was no ransom.

A whisper reached the growing wall,
Then fled the stricken builders,
As spectres when the cock's shrill call
The dreams of men bewilders.

Thus Drochil Castle stands to-day
A skeleton, a vision,
A frozen dream of human play
Struck dumb by fell derision.

And often human life on earth
Is but this tower of Drochil,
A thing conceived, denied the birth,
And dying in the struggle.

And if the tower had reached its height,
Been blest with rare completion,
And graced with many a stalwart knight
Of deeds and proud ambition,

Ah! who can tell if men should praise
The wine would fill this measure,
Nor would give life but to erase
The record of the pleasure!

Ah! little do poor mortals know
Beforehand what availeth,
For many hopes are better show
And bloom than fruit that killeth.

Now Nature, with a kindness great,
Adorns her empty castle,
And tribute to her glorious state
Brings Time, her mighty vassal.

The ivy groweth on the wall,
Where hath her nest the swallow;
Green grows the grass within the hall,
And flowers the shadow mellow.

And happy he whom God doth aid,
Whose wounds great love doth cover,
When all his earthly prospects fade,
And hope has given over!

LITTLE JESSIE.

WHEN I was in my garden fair,
Of lily bloom and daisy,
And breathed at eve the balmy air,
O, in came little Jessie.

I thought the bank of flowers was sweet
With beauties pure and gay,
Yet glad were they to busk her feet,
And call her Queen of May.

I vow she was both trig and clean,
And sage as she was bonnie;
Of fairies good she might be queen,
Who fairer is than ony.

O sweet the gowan on the brae,
With dew upon its bosom,
And pleasant in the month of May
Is the pink of apple blossom.

But all the flowers, though linked they be,
The lily with the daisy,
In beauty may not rival thee,
Thou coy and pretty Jessie!

In form and mien thou art a gem
Beneath the eye of morning,
Might sparkle on the brow of Fame,
Her most serene adorning.

Yet neither fame nor beauty rare,
With all their wild entrancement,
Nor riches great with eating care,
I seek for thy advancement.

With humble heart and modest mind,
A life of good behaviour,
May Jessie gladden all her kind,
And love the blessed Saviour!

CAIRNSMORE-OF-FLEET.

WHEN August had run half his race,
I journeyed from Dalry,
And came unto a lonely place,
Scarce seen but by the sky.

Where Rapploch Moss sleeps dark and deep,
In vest of boulders gray,
In friendly bower as sound my sleep,
Till I awoke with day.

The cheer of human kindness there,
Within the fir tree grove,
Inspired the wish that God would spare
The bliss of wedded love,

And make their peace like to the hill,
Or like a pool in Dee,
Their cup of fortune ever fill
As rivers fill the sea.

And as the water lily fair,
In gold and silver snow,
Up to the neck in pleasure rare
At will doth swim and grow,

In yon deep lane by Rapploch Moss,
That never knows the storm,
But where the waters pure as glass
Preserve the lily's form ;

So may their life grow fair and sweet,
Up to the neck in bliss,
Nor any storm or evil meet,
Nor any comfort miss!

Two hours before the height of day
I left the friendly bower,
And set my face for Cairnsmore gray,
Above the purple moor.

I saw the glede and falcon play
Above the Bruce's stone,
Each sought the other for his prey,
That he might rule alone.

In circling course they soared on high,
The glede was still below,
With all his might he came not nigh,
To hurt his agile foe.

The glede might rise, but higher still
Arose the falcon bold;
Though lacking size, he had the skill
'Gainst might his own to hold.

I left them circling to the right,
Behind me to Millyea;
Though wide the scene, yet they must fight
For life or kingly sway!

Across the bridge of Dee I went
A mile upon the road,
Then over heath and rock and bent
I took the moorland broad.

Beyond a bed of darksome peat
I reached a massive stone,
Thence saw Loch Grannoch, whence the Fleet
Goes forth to roam alone.

The stone a traveller had been
When glaciers held the sway,
The blocks of riven ice between,
It sat and rode away.

Then Cairnsmore lay in ice and snow,
'Twas winter evermore,
Although the west wind warm did blow,
With summer at the door.

Slow sped the traveller in ice,
How far I cannot tell,
Held fast as iron in a vice,
Or misery in hell.

Oft sank the sun in yonder west,
As Cairnsmore blossomed red,
By parting light in glory drest,
Till night came overhead.

The moon shone through the riven cloud,
The stars through heaven did stray,
While lustre weird on Cairnsmore's shroud
Did gleam till break of day.

Ah day and night might come and go,
The mountain slept in death,
A heavy sleep that none might know
Who boasts of drawing breath ?

Though deep his sleep in frozen bed,
The mountain heard a call,
That shook the prison of the dead,
And freedom gave the thrall.

Then Cairnsmore shook his frozen locks,
I trow he was not slow
To rend the ice, and strand the rocks
That lay upon his brow.

The glacier melted on the brae,
And left a hoary trail
Of stranded boulders grim and gray,
To tell new time their tale.

Now stand, thou sentinel! and mark
The summers as they come,
Hear thou the curlew and the lark
As through the sky they roam!

The heather busks thee round and round,
Its fragrance scents the hill,
Where thou at last hast summer found,
And honey bees their fill.

Sit thou upon thy mountain throne,
And rest thyself awhile!
But as for me I travel on,
And toil from mile to mile.

Beyond the stone I reach a peak,
And thence the region scan;
'Tis of Dun Kettrick that I speak,
Which boasts a famous man.

Within its shade was Murray born,
The musing shepherd lad,
Who from its heights beheld the morn
With childhood's wonder glad.

He gathered stores of learning vast,
Of things both far and near,
But envious death did overcast
His noon-day shining clear.

Upon a knoll within the glen
His monument behold !
Who would the haunt of genius ken
As the eagle high and bold.

Above the glen two ravens flew,
Their nest I ween was near,
With doubtful thought they kept in view
Their pleasure and their fear.

But south across a valley stood
The summit of Cairnsmore,
While thunder clouds o'erhead did brood,
And gloom the noon-tide hour.

Back eastward o'er a ridge I sped,
To left the silver shore
Of Grannoch loch, whence Fleet is led
To Solway by Dromore.

Upon my right a cleugh whose breast
Was busked with heather bloom,
Through it a stream ran north by west,
And sang through sweet perfume.

I heard a clear and tender voice
High in the summer air,
I looked and saw the falcon poise
His eye on heather lair.

Three birds they were, and eerie play
They had o'er cleugh and hill,
Dread visions they unto their prey,
And prophecies of ill.

Their voice seemed innocent and meek,
But few its meaning knew,
Save those whose blood their eye did seek,
Deep hid where heather grew.

Across the ridge I southward sped,
And reached the saddle seat,
Beside a well I sat and fed,
And drank the waters sweet.

Then up a steep and grass-grown brae
To Cairnsmore's crown I clomb,
And looked abroad upon the day,
Where shadows dim did roam.

The Orchar and the Craig of Dee,
Millyea and Caerlewee,
The Merrick and the river Cree,
The Solway and the Sea,

With woods and streams I may not name,
And lochs the hills among,
That wait the voice of coming fame,
Their glories yet unsung,

Were there before the gazer's eye,
  Some clear, some dimly seen,
But all a vision passing by,
  Is now and then has been!

I left the cairn be-north my way,
  Made for the town of Cree,
O'er heather bloom where bees did stray
  Far from their hive like me.

But like the bees I found a way
  To Minnypool and Cree,
As fair a bower as knoweth day,
  Who rides from sea to sea.

Where truth and friendship have abode,
  And sterling love hath sway,
The pilgrim ends the longsome road,
  And night surpasses day.

THE RAVEN.

A RAVEN sat upon a tree,
  He croaked and croaked, Remember,
And as he croaked he looked at me
  As gloomy as November.

Says I, My bird, what meanest thou
  To hasten on the shadow?
I would enjoy day's kindly glow,
  And stray through life's green meadow.

Why speakest thou of bygone years
That night has overtaken?
For man sufficient sorrow bears,
Though none the past may waken!

And then he shook his dusky wings,
And croaked out his remembers,
Till sprang anew the vanished springs,
And flamed the dying embers.

"My kingdom is the mighty past,
To me all powers surrender,
For after summer comes at last
The darkness of November."

The budding tree bids thee begone,
I hear the mavis singing,
The lark is soaring up alone,
With joy the welkin's ringing.

The raven shook his wings, and flew
Athwart the face of morning,
Until he vanished in the blue,
Still croaking forth his warning.

ON A LARK SINGING ABOVE KIRBY LINKS.

UPON the links of Kirby West
And Hoylake by the sea
The lark soars up into the sky,
And sings with raptured glee.

Beneath his eye are sand hills brown,
Where waves the star grass gray,
In tufts that flutter too and fro
As fitful breezes play.

The breakers ride past Helbrè isle,
White horses speeding fast,
While far to west great Snowdon rears
His head above the blast.

Beyond the Dee the dimpled form
Of Flintshire dark and green,
With clumps of wood and hollows sweet
The snow-gray hills between.

Lies all at rest, while Moil Famá
With shoulders broad keeps guard,
And holds aloft his rocky crest,
Where clouds are driving hard.

Up from the west they rolling rise,
Like mountains in a race,
And stretch their peaks into the blue
In wild and eager chase,

Though high they climb and seek the sun,
And in his ray grow bright,
Still higher soars the singing lark
Into the noon-day light.

THE MUCKLE BIN.

UPON a bright and autumn day
I came on Campsie Fells,
The streams were full of yesterday,
And eke the bubbling wells.

The clouds had poured their treasures forth,
And fed the running rills.
From morn to eve and through the night
Upon the moors and hills.

And then this day the sun arose
Upon an azure sky,
To glow upon the harvest fields,
And gleam on mountains high.

From Lennoxton to Campsie Glen,
And up from linn to linn,
I came unto the watershed,
And made for Muckle Bin.

Across the Carron nigh its source,
Up through the rushes green,
Upon the boggy slope I went,
And viewed the widening scene.

The flower of sweet Parnassian grass
Bloomed fair upon my way,
Among the rain drops clear, that hung
Like tears of yesterday.

There too was seen the eye-bright clear,
And heart's ease growing mild,
Upon the moist hill side, and gave
Their sweetness to the wild.

My footsteps sped into a glen
At foot of Muckle Bin,
Where mossy waters ran in haste,
And made a babbling din.

To north they went a little space,
And joined the Carron stream,
While eastward up the hill I bore
Beneath the noon-day beam.

As often as I turned me back
And looked unto the west,
Afar the mountains stood in rank,
In azure and at rest.

Benlomond o'er his waters dark,
And o'er his islets green,
And Ben Venue, whose rocky breast
Shut in a fairy scene.

Beyond the Trossachs and Ben A'n,
And north the Finlas Glen,
Benledi reared his triple peak
O'er Lubnaig's darksome den.

In majesty Benvoirlich rose
Above Glen Artney's braes,
And in the breast of fair Loch Earn
The face of heaven could trace.

*Stobinain o'er Balquhidder stood
Abreast with high Ben More,
And far to north Ben Lawers broad
Surveyed the Rannoch Moor.

I knew them well, those mountains old,
At sight of them arose
The shades of dim and distant years,
As mist where Carron flows.

They are the same as long ago,
When on their heights I went,
Saw suns arise and suns go down,
The heavens for my tent.

Why do ye crowd before my sight,
Ye ghosts of days gone by?
Your shadowy forms be-dim the hills,
And cloud the azure sky.

Away into your hollow caves
In the limbo of the past,
And let the joyous sun shine forth,
For life it speedeth fast!

A gray-blue mist o'er Carron broods,
It falls and lifts anon,
And golden grows beneath the sun,
And then away is gone.

* Pronounce Stobinain as Stobīnyan.

Before the south and east the clouds
O'erhung the Forth and plain,
The sun shot arrows through the gloom,
A bright and beaming rain.

The Forth was hid, but Abbey Craig
Before the Ochils stood,
And bore the Wallace monument
Above the misty flood.

There may it stand as long as time,
Or hills that wear the heath,
And let the name of Wallace live
As long as Scotsmen breathe!

Adown the Bin unto the south
I crossed the boggy fell,
From cairn to cairn to Campsie brow,
And thence into the dell.

The Caledonian camp was green,
The vest of youth it wore,
In sunshine sweet, untouched by time,
It rested as of yore.

I stood upon its verdant breast
And viewed the wrinkled hill,
Where torrents roar through gashes deep,
And linns their waters spill.

Adieu! broad hill, in green and gray,
Be-crowned with darkling moss,
Enjoy the sun and fleeting shades
That o'er thy shoulders cross!

The flocks find pasture on thy sides,
And on thy heather crown,
And rest them in thy hollows green
When yonder sun goes down.

Away he speeds unto the west,
And fainter grows the day,
That lingers on thy heathy crest
And on thy temples gray.

So speeds the radiance of a day
Yon rugged hills will close,
When o'er the sun gone down their peaks
Will redden as the rose.

The bloom will pass, the night descend,
The vision haste away,
And through the depths of ocean go,
To come another day.

LIGHT.

It was a day in June of fiery heat,
When sulphur clouds hung o'er the mountains high,
With lurid light, inmixed with ebon folds,
Where fire and thunder lay in treacherous sleep.
I saw a little hill whose greenness shone
With all the brilliance of a smiling sky,
While gloom sat brooding on the heights above.
And then I thought how much we owe to heaven!

Whose radiance with a touch can night dissolve,
And make a seat in humblest vale of life
More glad with day than peaks that pierce the sky.
For true it is, no height of mental power
But gropes in darkness like to chaos old,
Until at sovereign call the morning breaks!

THE RIVER TAY.

ON an October day,
From heights above Birkhill,
I saw the river Tay
Meandering at will.

Round sand banks darkly gray
It wended to the sea,
Would neither haste nor stay
For sorrow or for glee.

O Tay! why slow thy pace?
Thou once so fleet and strong,
Adown the glens to race,
The rugged rocks among.

Thy course is brief I ween,
Unknown to thee before,
Or no such haste had been
To meet the ocean's roar.

Thou wast a giant born
To leap and run with day,
And journey forth in scorn
Of aught would cross thy way.

Beside Benlawers' form,
Thy mother deep of breast,
Conceived thee in the storm
And gave thee to unrest.

Thy race was swift and keen,
Through brake and lea and wood,
'Tween banks of dimpled green
That feared thy rising flood.

Full many rivers ran
To join thee in the chase,
And fill the bridge's span,
Or bear it down apace.

Thy waters onward sped,
Nor recked they of the past,
As if thy channel led
To paradise at last.

But soon thy course was run,
Through bowers of day and night,
Through straths that love the sun,
And woods that mock the light.

But now the carse along
Where autumn grows her dowry,
And woods that piped with song
When skipped the "lass o' Gowrie."

Thy step is soft and slow,
  Would linger on the shore,
Or turn where breezes blow
  O'er loch and mountain hoar.

The word is scarcely said,
  Thy wave returns anon,
Say, wherefore hast thou fled,
  Why art thou backward gone?

Art thou afraid to meet
  The welcome of the sea,
And fain would'st find retreat
  By bracken-buskèd lea?

In vain thy flight fair Tay!
  Thou art o'ertaken soon,
The sea in dashing spray
  Embraceth thee at noon.

As bowstring backward drawn
  Speeds forth the arrow keen,
So thou hast backward gone
  On pathways thou hast been.

To rush forth in thy power,
  And ride upon the wave,
And make thy latest hour
  The triumph of the brave.

Thy weakness only seems,
  It still deceiveth sight,
Like time now silent streams,
  Then shows Niagara's might.

A bridge once spanned thy wave
On pillars deep and high,
And promised fair to brave
Thy tide and angry sky.

It weathered days and years,
And bore the sons of men,
With many hopes and fears,
Above thy rearing mane.

Oft from a giddy height
Upon an iron way,
They saw with troubled sight
Where still thy waters lay.

Or tost in boiling foam,
Between its pillars high,
As onward they did roam
Beneath a stormy sky.

Right glad were they to find
Their feet upon the sand,
Thy tumult left behind,
Themselves at home on land.

The pathway safe for long,
With terror at its side,
Is now the waves among.
The sport of driving tide.

One Sabbath eve did close
Upon a troubled day,
The hurricane arose,
And ragèd down the Tay.

The train went up through Fife,
  Sore baffled with the storm,
The elements at strife,
  Did prophesy of harm.

At length it came to Tay,
  Upon the bridge it rung,
Held on the iron way
  Was o'er the water swung.

Beyond the raving flood,
  That seeketh light in foam,
Struck by the tempest rude
  From waves that blindly roam,

Are fires that briskly burn,
  And glance unto the door,
And smile for the return
  Of those that come no more.

Upon the giddy train,
  When mid-way o'er the wave,
Struck fierce the hurricane,
  And plunged it in the grave.

Down, down into the night,
  Through depths of darkness, torn
By winds of dread affright,
  The sundered bridge is borne.

Within its grasp the train,
  Of human souls a crowd,
That dives into the main,
  And hides in horror's shroud.

At length the morning broke,
The darkness rode away,
And greater grief awoke
Before the face of day.

The tidings ran like fire,
They spread all Scotland thorough,
A cloud of arrows dire,
That bosoms pierced with sorrow.

Not one was spared to tell
The story of that doom,
Grim as the mouth of hell,
And secret as the tomb.

All that was done in thee,
Thou fair and smiling Tay !
Now turning with the sea,
And riding forth so gay.

Thou hidest well, I trow,
The sorrows of thy years,
Although thy waters flow
Between the broken piers.

Yet sorrows of mankind
May not be grief to thee ;
What north and south did bind
Is broke, and thou art free.

They build the bridge again,
Of broader, deeper found,
For empire is in men,
Who will thy power astound.

Yet will their triumph prove
A tribute to thy might,
For thou wilt freely rove
Beneath it day and night.

Roll on thy way fair Tay!
A river thou must be,
While stand the Grampians gray
Above the driving sea!

LOVE.

THE twinkle of the light on waving grass,
The shades of clouds that o'er the fields do pass,
The sough of winds that play among the trees,
The cuckoo's note that wanders in the breeze,
The murmur of the brook at gloamin' hour
When dew-drops gather on each pensive flower,
The ocean rolling on a bank of sand
In voice of thunder crying for the land,
The sun that rises on a thousand streams,
That run adown the braes to meet his beams,
From heather hills where browse the spreading sheep
And antlered deer in dimples vigils keep,
Are things to see and hear, but sweeter far
The voice and face of love than earth or star!

SCOTLAND'S CLAIM.

O SCOTLAND is my native land,
My foot is on the heather,
That spurns the despot's proud command,
But heroes band together.

The heather red is dyed with blood
Of patriots and martyrs,
Who rose for right, and brave withstood
The bait of pottage barters.

King Edward came with hawkish bill,
And thought to pick our bones,
And verily he wrought us ill,
And made us breathe in groans.

Then Scotland rose in wrath and might,
Her Wallace led the host,
That put the English power to flight,
And broke the tyrant's boast.

But treachery and English gold
Had forged the chains again,
And Scottish rights were basely sold
By greedy knavish men.

Then Bruce came on with battle axe,
Clave skulls without remede,
Who 'scaped the sword soon showed their backs,
And fled on terror's steed.

Then let not graceless fingers steal
What swords had failed to win,
Nor break the Union Treaty seal,
And chuckle o'er the sin.

Nor in a high and haughty mood,
Befits the robber great,
Lift up the heel so proud and rude,
And say, the seal of fate.

For Scotland has not fought so long,
To guard her law and throne,
Against ambition of the strong,
And dearly held her own,

To see the trophies she has won
Plucked from her royal head,
Her temples bare beneath the sun
That saw how Wallace bled.

On many a hard contested field
Her sons have conquered fame ;
Their triumphs on Britannia's shield
Have glorious made her name.

For truth and freedom they have striven,
Have prayed and toiled and died,
In every clime beneath high heaven,
Within the world wide.

And who can rule in every land,
Where'er their steps may roam,
With wisdom and with potent hand,
Prove right to rule at home.

On former feuds we harp no more
Between the Thames and Forth,
When valour in the days of yore
Was gallant south and north.

The stout and brave of nations three,
Around one flag unfurled,
Have fought for truth and liberty,
And triumphed round the world.

They've shared alike on tented field,
On frost and burning sand,
Three brothers wearing sword and shield,
Brave equals heart and hand.

Then let them share without debate
The right to rule at home,
And Britain erst by them made great
Will greater yet become.

The shamrock, thistle, and the rose,
Will form a richer wreath
Of glory than this world knows
On the hither side of death.

For love and equity have sway
Beyond a despot's ken,
And win for loyalty the day
Denied to armèd men.

ON THE SANDS OF DEE.

THE moon rose over Kirby hill,
Agleam with silver light,
And in the west fair Venus shone,
The queen of all the night.

High to the south Orion stood
Above the sough of Dee,
Held fast in heaven by viewless bands,
As tides within the sea.

A dim light in the zenith shone,
Bespoke the Sisters Seven,
Far watchers on the battlements
Between this earth and heaven.

Upon the bank a gray-blue dress
Of stranded wave was seen,
In pools and wrinkles of the sand,
Where late the tide had been.

The plover's sad and lonely cry
Sprang from the watery floor,
The curlew's wild and thrilling notes
Rose up to heaven's door.

Afar and wide the moaning sea
Did break on leagues of shore,
Although the stars their glories threw
Into its darksome core.

TO THE HUNGRY SEA.

BROWN waves, brown waves,
  Breaking on the sand,
Your teeth are full of gravel,
  And yet ye cry for land!

Brown waves, brown waves,
  Breaking on the shore,
Your teeth are full of gravel,
  Of earth what would ye more?

Haste ye, haste ye,
  Into your mother's breast,
Into the dells of ocean,
  And enter into rest!

Strive not, strive not,
  Ye cannot break away;
Her cords are strong and winning,
  Ye cannot say her nay!

Gasp ye, foam ye,
  To hold the atom dust?
She draws you to her bosom,
  Away to sea ye must!

Far off, far off,
  From shore the waves remove,
And mother ocean follow
  Through deep green dells to rove.

Made clean and pure,
  And growing as they flow,
They gather strength to travel
  O'er depths that none can know.

And men, like waves,
  Run gasping to the land,
For gold and veins of silver
  Laid up in clay and sand.

They break their teeth
  With gritty stones of care,
Yet fill themselves and sicken
  With blue clay of despair.

They foam and fret,
  Distress themselves in vain,
To grasp the sand for pleasure,
  And strike on rocks with pain.

Ye sons of men!
  Obey the sway divine,
As tides that follow ocean,
  If life ye would not tine!

THE GOWAN.

O GOWAN white and rosy!
  Like light of heaven's smile
Upon the lap of May,
  Thou dost the time beguile.

Thy bloom on laverock's nest,
And on her folded wing,
Doth bless the tender brood,
While high her mate doth sing.

The cattle on the lea
Have fed their full till noon,
Are resting on thy snow
In this sweet month of June.

But other flowers will come,
They peer around thy feet,
Thy bloom will soon be gone,
Like all things fair and sweet.

The clover bloom will rise,
And thou wilt pass away,
A stranger to those eyes
That see thee now so gay!

But thou wilt come again,
For thee no heart may weep;
Thy life is lovely joy,
And then a passing sleep.

No time for weariness,
Thy life is short, yet long,
A draught of bliss, then rest,
To wake in raptured song!

SUMMER.

THE breeze of summer, sweet and mild,
Is fragrant with the breath of flowers,
The curlew thrills the moorlands wild,
And the mavis sings in leafy bowers.

In darksome wood that belts the hill
And shadow throws upon the brae,
The cuckoo drops her notes at will,
Repeats an old yet melting lay.

She whispers in the ear of morn
The hope of gladsome days to come,
The story of the yet unborn
Beguiles her green and woodland home.

Beside the hard and stony road,
Fenced in by thorns on either hand,
The wild brier blooms and spreads abroad
The scent of roses o'er the land.

O'er gowan lea where clover white
Grows up among the tender grass,
List ye the lark in morning light
As o'er the dew the breeze doth pass!

In song of pure and wondrous joy
It riseth, nor would heaven miss,
Nor can a grain of earth's alloy
Come in between its lips of bliss.

The light and shadow of the sky
Pass o'er the waving fields of hay,
And o'er the bent and heather fly,
Like joy and grief at eerie play.

The sun ascends from morn to noon,
Declines and roundeth to the west,
The daylight fades, and shadows soon
Beguile the world to its rest.

But yet the summer day so long
Bequeathes a glory to the night,
A radiance and a voice of song,
And fragrance of the hawthorn white.

When gloamin' broods upon the hill,
Within her downy mantle gray,
The corn-craik wanders at her will,
And sportive cries among the hay.

The cushat croodles in the wood
That busks the dimpled water side,
And silent eve doth hear the flood,
That leaps the linn in foaming tide.

Fleet speeds the ghostly summer night,
Like dog-watch on a peaceful sea ;
The cock crows clear, and morning light
Beams forth on nature far and free.

Thus summer hours do hasten soon
From morn to eve and eve to morn ;
For heaven and earth their honeymoon
Of gladsome time anew is born.

FROM KELSO TO WARK.

UPON a breezy autumn day,
From Kelso town I took my way,
Adown the banks of silver Tweed,
As on she flows through wood and mead.

I touched the Eden as it sped
To lose itself in Tweed's wide bed ;
The wild dove lingered at my side,
As if with man she would abide.

The west wind blew through Birgham street
Of thatch-roofed cots, as glad to greet
The face of youth the ear of age,
The welcome friend of child and sage.

In colours as the poppy gay
The damsels work among the hay,
With swishing sound the mower lays
The swath of clover on the braes.

Wark's ancient strength still rears its head,
A ruin gray that none may dread,
A village nestles in its breast,
And peace inhabits war's old nest.

Its wall, not frowning as of yore,
Looks northward unto Scotland's shore,
Across the Tweed, that softly flows,
And lingers where the ivy grows.

Out o'er the fields, and far beyond
The woods where night hath sleep profound,
High into day the Cheviot's rear,
Through mists obscure, their shoulders bare.

BEN-Y-GLOE.

AT last I stand on Ben-y-Gloe,
A dream of by-gone time,
And feel the summer breezes blow
Across an upper clime.

From Cairngorm's hoary heights, where dwells
The ptarmigan in gray,
To Ben Muich-dhui's silver wells,
The moon lit up my way.

O'er granite mouldered into sand
I reached the rugged throne,
Whence Ben Muichdhui has command
O'er ruins widely strewn.

From heaven high the half moon shone,
The Dee ran strong below,
A glory from the sun late gone
Did 'mong the shadows glow.

Descending o'er the loose gray stones,
I heard the sound of deer,
Were talking in the shade in tones
Of wonder and of fear.

My footsteps reach at midnight hour
The banks of infant Dee,
Where through the glen its waters roar,
And murmur for the sea.

A sauntering walk by Dee's rough course,
An hour through darksome glen,
While leaping waters breaking hoarse
Came down from every ben,

I reached a rock by the bridle way,
Stood lone the heath among,
Beneath its shade I down me lay,
And slept while waters sung.

The murmur of a thousand streams
Through slumber softly ran,
And wandered through the realm of dreams
As maze without a plan.

I woke, and journeyed on with Dee
Unto the gladsome dawn ;
And on the hills 'twas sweet to see
The stag and playful fawn.

They rested 'mong the rocks so gray,
On steep that faced the morn,
Well knowing where to find the day
As soon as it was born.

By rocky Dee, on fringe of green,
Some feeding strayed alone,
With startled fear they fled the scene
And straight from sight were gone.

Now I must bid farewell to Dee,
And wade thy troubled wave,
Thy course is eastward to the sea,
Mine westward to the grave.

Go thou in search of morning's home,
And with thy channel play,
Nor may thy waters as they roam
Grow weary of the way!

My footsteps take the moorland brown,
Whence streams are born to flow,
Now north then south, but always down,
Wherever they may go.

I came upon the bed of Tilt,
And heard its waters play,
As on they ran with sunshine gilt,
And song along the way.

The streams came down from many hills
To fill its horn of song,
It drank, and sped o'er rocky ills
In flow of music strong.

It spoke of mountains stern and high,
But none like Ben-y-Gloe,
His head was in the azure sky,
His feet the shades below.

His skirts were green, and blooming heath
Upon his breast did glow,
A crown of stony gray did wreathe
The head of Ben-y-Gloe.

I heard of thee in Tilt's wild lay,
  I saw thee from the Garry;
My dream was of thee night and day,
  And hope for thee did tarry.

Now from thy peak, bold Ben-y-Gloe!
  What hope foretold I view,
And glad am I at last to know
  Her prophecy was true.

I climbed thee with a lover's joy,
  And seated on thy throne
I see no tint of base alloy
  Upon thy image known.

If for all hope could memory show
  Such proof as thou hast given,
'Twere sweet to dream, and bliss to know
  The dream foreshadowed heaven!

A SABBATH DAY.

THE sun is speeding to the west,
  And soon will end another day,
Of all the week the first and best
  To light a weary mortal's way.

Up from the east that sun came forth,
  And rose in splendour to his throne,
From which he lit the deep dark north
  With summer radiance all his own.

Transfigured by his glorious face,
Oppressed by brightness and out done,
Earth closed her eyes, nor dared to trace
The features of the beaming sun.

From time to time a breeze of air
Awoke and shook the fields of corn,
And whispers sweet came here and there
Of life revived and heaven-born.

The Sabbath bells pealed loud and strong
Their earnest notes o'er earth abroad,
Then path and street began to throng
With pilgrims to the house of God.

They heard the gospel message told,
That wondrous narrative of grace
To fallen mortals, young and old,
Of every clime and every race.

The crowds that met now part once more,
The church doors close, and silence reigns
Where human hearts were glad or sore
'Neath warnings stern or melting strains.

Unto their homes of various state
The sons of men return and rest,
In humble cot and palace great,
While speeds the sun to reach the west.

His course adown the azure height
Illumes fair Arran's hills with gold,
That stand between him and the night,
That doth the eastern world hold.

He hastens to his watery bed,
  As down he dives into the wave,
And as the sea rolls o'er his head
  A glory dawneth from his grave.

So from the grave of Christ arose
  A light of glory to the skies,
That shines on earth, and ever throws
  The gleam of hope on human eyes.

A SUMMER DAY.

THE sun shone clear upon the hill,
  The bee sucked heather bloom,
The air upon the bent was still,
  Nor waved the bush of broom.

The streamlet hurried down the brae,
  As if a race to win ;
From rock to rock in showers of spray
  It fell into the linn.

In dimples of the mountain lay
  The panting herds of deer,
The sheep o'er hills afar did stray,
  By crags and lonely mere.

On silken wing the butterfly
  Flew softly, in the light,
Rejoicing 'neath the azure sky,
  With exquisite delight.

The deep and shaggy forest dark,
That stands beneath the hill,
Had sung its song with morning lark,
And then was lone and still.

Beneath the gaze of heaven's eye
Earth slept a joyous sleep,
She dreamed of love, and heaved a sigh
Of waters sounding deep.

Across the warm and sultry sky
There came a troubled cloud,
'Mid gleams of fire it floated high,
And shook with thunders loud.

Upon a north wind swift and cold,
It to the south did run,
And with the face of darkness bold
Came up before the sun.

The fields grew dark, the echoes woke
From sleep in many a hill,
Earth shook with every thunder stroke,
And trembling ran each rill.

Down came the rain upon the woods,
Where crouched the timid deer,
While on the moors the rushing floods
Swept past the sheepfolds near.

The storm blew past, and shining clear
The sun came forth again,
And beamed on mount and moorland mere,
Like pleasure after pain.

The rain-drops on the bended grass
  Like sprinkled silver lay,
A wind across the fields did pass,
  And shook the drooping hay.

The sheep spread far upon the braes,
  To crop the freshened blade,
And singing birds resumed their lays
  Within the woodland shade.

The sun sped onward to the west,
  O'er hills and bowers of glee,
And in a cloud of glory drest
  He plunged into the sea.

THE PAPS OF JURA.

THE Sound of Islay rests to-day,
  The tides have ceased to run ;
They have forgot their merry play
  To bask beneath the sun.

From Portaskaig the boat goes forth,
  Two rowers bend the oar ;
They bear a pilgrim to the north,
  To Jura's rocky shore,

To spend a day upon the moors,
  And climb the mountains high,
To scent the heather, breeze, and flowers,
  That bloom his pathway by.

He sped across the moorland's breast,
Moss hags, and channels deep
Of waters, where the heron's nest
O'erhangs the linn's wild steep.

The bent was waving in the wind
Its brown and tufty locks,
The light of heaven was clear and kind
To Jura's heath and rocks.

In dimples of the lonely fell
A startled deer would spring,
And tidings of its fear would tell,
Swift as a bird on wing.

Amid the moss the cranberry grew
With blushing cheeks so red,
The crowberry and blae-berry blue
Still hailed him as he sped.

Their sweets he gathered as he climbed,
Like honey on the spear,
And labour unto pleasure timed,
Or joy with eager care.

Upon the summit of each hill
A brief and gladsome rest,
While mountain forms the space did fill
Far east to north and west.

With toil and pleasure on he trod,
Ascending and descending,
O'er rugged rocks and moorland broad,
A symphony unending.

With broken notes of discord rare,
That lent a slight alloy,
Like empty shades of fleeting care
Before the face of joy.

Returning o'er the moorland brown
Through many a fairy dell,
Where waters ran forever on,
An endless tale to tell.

He travelled on till night and day
In clump of hazel met,
And there began an eerie play,
Just when the sun had set.

By silver birk and darksome fir
Did frisk the light and shadow,
While red cock rose, "bick-bick-a-bir,"
O'er heath and boggy meadow.

The sun sank slowly in the west,
And left a brooding light
To simmer on the ocean's breast,
And keep at bay the night.

The pilgrim crossed the Sound again
Upon a sea of glass,
And rested in a shady inn,
Until the night did pass.

And he whose life is such a day,
From rosy dawn to eve,
May never wish the light away,
Nor o'er his journey grieve.

FROM KILLARNEY TO THE TOP OF CARRANTUAL, AND BACK THROUGH THE GAP OF DUNLOE.

BLITHE is thy smile, thou summer day!
That greets the fields from azure sky;
I'll sun me in thy gladsome ray,
And climb with thee yon mountains high.

From where Killarney's lakes repose
To Carrantual's rocky throne,
Where morn and eve bloom as the rose
O'er Coom-a-duv's dark vale and lone,

With gladsome heart I took my way
'Mong fields of corn, began to glow
With golden ripeness, while the hay
Breathed sweetness where the winds did blow.

Erelong the fields were left behind,
My way went o'er the Eagle's Nest,
Where sunshine and the sportive wind,
With laughing rain, the crags caressed

Awhile on Carrantual's seat
I viewed the landscape far and near,—
The darksome lakes beneath my feet,
And azure sea beyond Cape Clear.

I saw spread out in green and gold
The breast of Kerry moving fair;
It spoke of paradise of old
Restored to sight and shining there.

The time was short, I could not stay,
Nor might the vision fair abide
Should I remain, but haste away,
Like day before night's coming tide.

I went the mountain side a-down,
Into the gloom of Coom-a-duv,
By dungeon lake, o'er moorland brown,
With marsh land bleak and holly grove.

Into the Gap of Dunloe strait,
I pressed into the shade with haste,
Past lakes maintain their primal state,
Ere light arose on chaos waste.

I came on kindred travellers there,
With fellowship the gloom we broke ;
And from the mountains far and near
The echoes of wild joy awoke.

Anon we reach Kate Kearney's cot,
Where narrow glen spreads into plain ;
Another Kate stands in the lot
Of her who waked the poet's strain.

The pilgrim comes again to rest
Within the inn he left at morn,
Hushed by the sigh of Loch Leane's breast,
Until another day is born.

Within the east the dawn blooms forth,
And redder Purple Mountain glows,
The stars retreating west and north,
From where the trooping sunshine goes.

The pilgrim wakes, and starts anew
Another journey with the day,
Among green isles, o'er waters blue,
Then " o'er the hills and far away."

THE THORN AND THE BIRK.

HAIL to thy branches spreading wide,
With crimson blossom rich and rare,
Thou thorn tree ! of this wood the pride,
When June light streams through cloudless air.

When winter storms had bared the wood,
The bleakest form of all the trees
Was this thorn tree, the while it stood
In naked spikes that pierced the breeze.

The lofty poplar, late so bare,
Among the last the sun to hail,
A robe of green begins to wear,
That trembles as if in a gale.

New-born to joy, each leaf doth wave
A merry flag upon the breeze,
That now the sunbeams gently lave
Amid the shades of neighbouring trees.

More deep, though quiet, is the mirth
That sleeps within this crimson thorn,
Whose grief to joy has given birth,
As darkness blooms into the morn.

Yet thorns still grow, though hid in green,
The memories of the past remain,
The bloom will fade, and what has been
Will come again like clouds on rain.

Such is the joy pertains to earth,
The soil where thorns and thistles grow,
Where sorrow keepeth pace with mirth,
And over rocks sweet waters flow.

Beyond thy crimson bloom uprears
The graceful birk, a joyous sight,
Whose feathery screen of leaves appears
Earth's green be-gemmed with heaven's light.

Then grow together, lovely pair,
The hope of heaven with joy of earth;
Sweet is the bloom on thorns of care
That yields to pure and lasting mirth!

THE END OF THE YEAR.

O'ER dell and lea, where gowan bloom
Upbore the dew-drops to the morn,
The cranreugh grows its hoary plume,
Beguiling nature's icy urn.

The streams that bounded at the call
Of thunder storms among the moors,
Then laughed and leaped each water-fall,
Now muffled creep o'er dungeon floors.

The mountains, where the summer dawn
With purple dyed the blushing heath,
Now wear upon each sunless throne
The gleaming ice and snowy wreath.

The birds, that sang the whole day long
O'er moor and dell in playful breeze,
Entranced within their own sweet song,
Are dumb, or sing across the seas.

THE FARMER'S LILT.

THE farmer sings in an olden song,
While he seeks the field of hay,
His youth has gathered its hay-time long
Ere his sombre October day.

And why so tender the notes that spring
From his heart while he turns afield?
For music has gone from the birds on wing,
And dumb is the woodland bield.

Full many a hay-time he has seen
In joy to come and depart,
But song is a treasure, a field whose green
In its freshness still waves at his heart.

Oft may the springs of song return,
While he walks the fields of hay,
And hope be his that may not mourn
The things that pass away!

TO MONT BLANC.

FAREWELL ! thou royal mount, whose lonely reign
I shared awhile in mid-day light and cloud,
For thee the dawn first wakes, and on thy head
Pours light as ointment pure, fit for thy state ;
And after day has left the world beneath,
A heavenly glory that consumeth not
Glows on thy snowy robe like heath on fire,
Whose ruddy sheen keeps gloomy night at bay.

Thy state is changeless all throughout the year,
No cuckoo voice reminds thee of the spring,
No flowers appear upon thy frozen breast,
Nor well-springs warble music in thine ear.

The shroud of death arrays thy awful form,
Thou giant warrior of the mountain land,
O'ertaken by the snow-drift of old time,
That frozen round thee hath become a grave,
Wherein thou standest, still alive at heart
While death's cold arms and strong close round thy ribs
But though the snows of death come down on thee,
And turn to iron plates from year to year,
As if they would enclose thee firm and fast
Within the gates of an eternal prison,
With calm enduring strength thou bid'st thy time,
In hope that as the ages wear away
The ice and snow will melt from off thy form,
And death be gone, while mists that Eden knew

Rise up, and with the sunshine weave for thee
The robe of life that blooms on Scotia's hills.

Now cheer thee with the voice of waters strong,
Born of the icy death that holds thee fast,
And with the thunder of the dreadful avalanche
Strike thou the hours that speed thy day of jubilee

Thy winter time is long, but thou hast strength,
So fare thee well! to summer I return,
For it is brief and coming winter long.
But if our inward life like thine be true,
Nursed by the springs of love in Christ the Lord,
We may not fear the icy shroud of death,
Nor snow-drift of the ages wreathing round,
But bide our time, assurèd of the day
When all the might of death shall broken be,
And o'er the ruins of his dismal home
Shall immortality arise and sing, an angel fair,
Like morn in May above the ruins of the night.

TO THE PRIMROSE.

ONCE more, sweet flower! I hail thy bloom
Upon the dimpled brae,
The shaded steeps thou dost illume
With hope's inviting ray.

O free from sin and guilty pains
Is he claims kin with you,
Thou emblem of fair innocence
And bliss that Eden knew!

The dew-drops of the early spring
  Fall gently on thy breast,
And radiance from the morning's wing
  Awakes thee from thy rest.

Thou dwellest in the western breeze,
  When sportive lambkins play,
While music rises from the trees,
  And larks ascend the day.

Pure as the sky that bends above,
  And happy as the thought
That hastens to the breast of love,
  How envied is thy lot!

Thou dost recall the days that were
  Before the storm and rain;
Up through the years of grief and care
  My childhood comes again.

Bloom on with each succeeding spring,
  Thou joy of eyes that see;
Then, wheresoe'er life's dawn takes wing,
  It will return with thee!

ON A SONGSTER.

THOU happy bird! what is the theme
  That fills thee with exultant joy?
Awake, or singing in a dream,
  Thy happiness knows no alloy.

If dreams of heaven are in thy sleep,
  While clammy dews sit on thy wing,
O'er vanished bliss thou may'st not weep,
  Whom morn awakes in heaven to sing!

A CHILD'S FANCY.

In thought I often walk the hills
  That crown my native spot,
Where youthful visions floating o'er
  Endeared my childhood's lot.

And where the shepherd oft was seen
  Within his plaid to fold
The tender lambs, benumbed by frost,
  And March winds biting cold.

Then as the sun's glad beams did fall
  Upon the nearest height,
I looked with fond and wistful eyes
  Upon that stream of light.

I longed to wander to yon land,
  Whose mountains stood afar
Into the light of morn and eve,
  The sunshine and the star;

And thought my feeble limbs could tread
  The valley and the hill,
And through the gates of glory pass
  Down with the sun at will,

Into the mystic radiance
  Beyond the burnished cloud,
And down into the pearl depths
  That sleep when winds are loud.

TO THE LARK.

WHAT is the secret of thy song,
  That bids thee ever sing,
While winter reigns the whole day long,
  And hail drops on thy wing?

The ploughman listens to thy lay,
  While trudging o'er the plain,
The hoarfrost vanishes from day
  At hearing of thy strain.

Whence came thy wing? sweet warbler, say!
  What higher joy to find?
In hope to reach a fairer day
  Than that you left behind?

Else how could song such sweetness pour
  O'er nature's hoary tomb;
Thy strains had failed thee every hour,
  And grief had sealed thy doom.

Thou soarest up among the clouds
  In joyous revels free,
And sportest with night's waning shrouds,
  The blithesome dawn with thee.

But when the day has sunk again,
And night invites to rest,
What fee hast thou for thy sweet strain
Asleep in lowly nest?

Where is the guerdon of thy tale,
That lightened gloomy thought,
That flung joy's carol on the gale,
And cheered man's outcast lot?

No gowans sweet the pillow guard
Where cranreugh busks thy head;
Thy feet rest on the icy sward,
And cold winds search thy bed.

How didst thou find in such a home
Those strains to hail the morn?
What whispers to your fancies come
In spot so bleak and lorn?

It is not man or aught on earth
That can inspire thy song;
Whence came the power that stirs thy mirth
And joy the whole day long?

Say, in thy path in yonder sky,
Above the cloud and sleet,
If songs of spirits pass thee by,
And lilts of bliss complete?

What bids thee mount so free and glad
O'er mists that warp the light?
Is it to leave a region sad
And reach some azure height,

Some scat above the frost and snow,
  Where cold winds ne'er are driven,
But far to east and west may blow
  The balmy airs of heaven?

Is it pure joy that leads you on
  Above the world so free,
Through cloudless realms about the sun?—
  O that I were with thee!

Thou art a lonely bard of bliss
  In realms free and broad;
If findest thou, why should we miss
  The pleasure fields of God?

The echoes of some far off strain
  Entrance thy wakeful ear,
And through thy throat the glad refrain
  Comes down to mortals here.

Some heavenly melody awakes
  Each morn thy little brain,
Then on thy breast the daylight breaks,
  On man thy cheerful strain.

Sing on within your bower of bliss
  Beyond the fleecy cloud,
Till nature wakes with spring's sweet kiss,
  And thaw winds melt her shroud!

Sing, till she rise in kirtle green,
  Her breast bedecked with flowers,
And on her head the glorious sheen
  Of summer's laughing hours.

ON SEEING A LONELY CLOUD WHEN TRAVELLING OVER BLACKWATER HEATH IN JUNE.

HAIL, wandering cloud! my wayward brother, hail!
Though strange to me thy birth and native spot,
Whether in bay, in calm, or in the storm,
We're kindred in our onward pilgrim lot.

Though like thy native sea yon heaven's blue,
No fountain sparkles there to gladden thee,
Where, groping for the tracks of rain and dew,
Thy arms will pine away afar from sea.

Hast thou remembrance of a happier time?
That now thy steps seem loath to leave the west,
Thy robes wave backward to a distant clime,
Where wearied streams repose on ocean's breast.

A few more moments sped, and where has gone
That grateful shadow wandering thwart the sun?
'Tis not returned, nor has it journeyed on,
To traceless nothingness its course has run.

Is this thy end? for whom the gates of heaven
Were opened wide to give a passage through,
Sun-dyed thy form, by gentle breezes driven
Across yon vault of deep and distant blue!

Nay, even the cloud that was, though now unseen,
Sucked by the beams that basked upon its lee,

At eve will sink as dew to pearl the green,
  Then seep to rills that warble to the sea.

So, though our frailty brings us to the grave
  With toilsome step across the heath of years,
There is that Time's corrupting breath can brave,
  And lives immortal in its hopes and fears.

May God, who at the first my spirit made,
  And led me onward through the gates of time,
Still guide me in the sunshine and the shade,
  Until I reach his own celestial clime!

When weary of the world, as men may be,
  When gladdens neither light nor stream nor grove,
Nor mountain peaks 'mid anthems of the sea,
  My heart would rest in God and cease to rove.

Like to the cloud I would return again
  Unto those fields where pleasures bloom alway,
Where hope gives birth to joys unknown to pain,
  As morn the dews that bless the summer day!

TANTALLAN HOLD.

SURVIVOR of a distant age,
  When warriors trod thy lordly hall,
No more may joy and feudal rage
  Upon thy slumbering echoes call!

Upon thy breast doth ivy creep,
Fed on thy ribs be-dript with rime,
It wrappeth thee in quiet sleep,
And binds the scars and wounds of Time.

Thou gazest on the ocean's brow,
'Neath moon and stars and shining day,
While soughing tides rush to and fro,
And break on thee their silver spray.

But while old ocean still retains
The glory of her former state,
To thee the wreck alone remains
Of power whose terrors made thee great.

Beneath thy shield or in thy dread
The Lothians bore their harvest wave,
As from thy walls the Douglas led
The might could either kill or save.

Now mansions on their bosom stand
That neither heed thy frown nor smile,
Yet, though forgotten of the land,
Still from thy feet the tides resile.

Long quenched the fire in roofless hall,
Where laughter rang and tales were spun,
And bards would ancient deeds recall
In words that fought and victory won.

Nor may we grieve such splendours fade,
And they are gone whose strength thou wert;
Peace reigns, nor suffers warrior's raid
To spoil and make the widow's heart!

Long may'st thou stand, for ages show
The form of war upon the green,
In times of peace, that men may know
Their day is better than has been!

Long on thy broken, foot-worn stairs
May wild doves safely build their nest,
And up thy aisles weird wandering airs,
From land and sea, enchant thy rest!

THE NORTH STAR.

SERENE thy light, bright worlds above,
Thou star the crown in Nature's head!
While others rising, setting, rove,
Still from on high thy light is shed.

The years course round about the sun,
Upon the green-robed seat of earth,
And seasons brood, or gaily run
Upon the scenes of grief and mirth.

They tell the old tales o'er again,
Of youth and age, of life and death,
Of April bloom and autumn grain,
Or reaped, or withered by a breath.

The old familiar scenes appear
With darker shades adown the glen,
While o'er the hills my footsteps steer
Past ancient homes and stranger men.

The grave has buried light and love,
That once shone fair on yonder lea ;
The sun from cloudless throne above
Will ne'er return such beams to me.

O could my spirit find a seat
Secure as thine in its repose,
Temptation's clouds beneath my feet,
And passion's waves of wasting woes!

Yet e'en thy light but only guides
Across the deep and wrecking sea,
And mother earth, where death's dark strides
O'ertake at last where'er we flee!

There is a light of purer ray
And older date than thou canst claim,
A light which is the fount of day,
And hath an everlasting name.

That light is He, who radiance shed
Upon the gloom of sinful man,
Broke through the night that held the dead,
And showed the way to heaven again.

Be Thou my Sun, with guiding beam
To shine upon life's roughsome road,
O'er paths uneven onward stream
Through Death's dark glen to Thy abode!

A NIGHT ON THE ICE.

HERE comes the curler's shouting roar
And sounds from the frozen waters,
The wail of the Naïades of yore,
The dirge of Ocean's daughters.

They mourn the days when the soft waves came,
And their curls bathed with flowing,
As they swam and sang of love and fame
The way that the tide was going.

Then the sun shone warm from his seat above,
And valleys and hills were sighing,
With love from the flowers and songs from the grove,
While in music day was flying.

The spreading glory that girds the sun
In the west grows pale and weary,
Till the gloamin' sky, by night o'errun,
Calls out her watch stars eerie.

I look around, but the lake is still,
And silence rests on the hoar-frost
That silvers the sod of plain and hill,
Which the green of April wore first.

The curler's cry doth speed along,
While echo's throat doth warble,—
A stream of broken, wandering song,
A melody of Babel.

The moon is up, and a misty light
  Rains down on hill and hollow ;
You scarcely know 'tis day or night,
  Where ray and shadow follow.

The silence of the lonely fell
  Is broke by gleesome laughter,
Or street, or desert, who can tell
  The voice and stillness after?

A shadow of that ancient time
  When light broke o'er the border,
And fought with chaos in the clime
  Of darkness and disorder.

A DAY UP TWEEDSIDE.

'TWAS up the vale of Tweed I went,
  From Melrose Abbey still and gray,
The light was clear that heaven sent
  To make that brief December day.

The Eildon hills look fair to see
  Within the lustre of the dawn,
Time could not touch those children three,
  As gay as ages long agone!

I turned my back upon their bloom,
  And sought the shadows gray and lone,
That circle Abbotsford with gloom,
  And guard the gate of greatness gone.

Down through the shade by Fawdon farm,
I came to where Tweed's waters run,
And crossed the waves to Boldside warm
And joyful 'neath the kindly sun.

With left hand next to Tweed's fair stream,
I followed up the winding glen,
Like pilgrim through an eerie dream
Of pleasure interwined with pain.

In woods bereavèd of the leaf
The wind wails through a roofless room,
Nor finds a shade to give relief,
Save 'neath the firtree's darksome plume.

The long forsaken nests appear
All open to the passer's view,
Where hedges feel the Winter sere,
And wait the Spring makes all things new.

Upon the rough and naked thorn
The hip and haw their scarlet show,
And little birds are not forlorn,
Though all the hills be clad with snow.

Flow on, sweet Tweed! between thy banks,
Past ruins gray and mansions fair,
While higher up the mountain ranks
Make thee their thought and constant care.

I traced their course up throngh the glen,
Nigh to "the bush aboon Traquair,"
Through solitude and haunts of men,
Till night obscured the vision fair.

Between St. Ronan's well and thee
I laid me down to rest and sleep,
While rain-storm drove o'er Minchmoor free,
And made thy waves run swift and deep.

Thy waters ran into my dream,
And filled the arch of Fancy's form,
Then bore it down into the stream,
To perish in the roaring storm.

I woke, and saw thy waters roll
Between their banks so green and still,
They would not rest, but sought a goal
Far from their native cleugh and hill!

Your brown flood hastens down the vale,
To clear 'neath brighter days to come,
With silver waves the ocean hail,
And reach again the mother home.

My steps go up thy fairy glen,
Thy waters unto ocean roll;
And as thy waves the sons of men
Pass onward till they reach the goal!

BEN-NA-CHIE.

THE morning light has come again,
The breeze is blowing free,
The clouds that gather for the rain
Rise joyous from the sea.

They rise to sport an April day
Upon the azure sky,
To sun their cheeks in golden ray
Upon the mountains high.

Then let me haste to Ben-na-chie,
From Meldrum old and gray,
And from the rock afar to see
The visions of the day!

With steady step and giving hand
The sower sows the seed,
The plough boy harrows o'er the land,
The lark soars o'er the mead.

The Ury's banks are growing green,
Late blanched by Winter's blast,
Pitcaple's woods with shadows screen
Its waters flowing past.

The fir trees fresh and straight they grow,
And form for song a bower;
No season of decay they know,
Their beauty's aye in flower.

The farm town of Knockollochie
Is basking in the sun,
And from the mill-pond, leaping free,
The waters onward run.

They have forgot the ancient wail
At eve of the Harlaw;
The pleasures of to-day prevail,
O'er age youth's green doth grow.

Fair woods adorn its rocky crown,
And through its Adam side
The ploughshare merrily is drawn,
To win a harvest bride.

Close by the bare and dusty way
There stands the Maiden Stone,
Arrayed in livery of gray,
All silent and alone.

She hears no soughing of the wood,
Where grows or pines the leaf,
And streamlets die, or rush in flood,
'Neath sway of seasons brief.

In plaid of changeless gray, she feels
No breath of genial spring,
Or song that through the woodland steals
Upon the cuckoo's wing.

Though joy may scamper round the hill,
And song cheer young and old,
In Summer sun as Winter chill
The Maiden's heart is cold.

Pitrodie's woods beskirt the feet
Of heath-clad Ben-na-chie,
And through their shade the breezes fleet,
And hum from tree to tree.

The clouds across the welkin scud,
The pilgrim maketh way
O'er road deep worn with wheel and flood,
That climbs the purple brae.

His footsteps trace the moorland height,
O'er rocky peak and scaur,
Where plain and sea spread out to sight,
And mountains of Braemar.

Upon the tower of Ben-na-chie
The winds of heaven light,
And play a weirdsome melody
Through rents of ancient might.

The view is sweet and wild and far
That Ben-na-chie commands,
By day or night, 'neath sun or star,
A glimpse of many lands.

Behold the sun is westering fast,
His light declineth soon;
The day that's born is nigh the past,
E'en in the month of June.

Then, pilgrim, in this April light,
Descend, nor linger more;
Thy life, like day, is still in flight,
Thy path is on before!

THE CANNACH ON THE MOSS.

O WELCOME, cannach bloom!
A flower so soft and white,
As sweet and pure as snow
Upon the breast of night.

Amid the bents so gray,
And bogs of gloomy peat,
Thou wavest in the wind,
'Neath shade and sunshine fleet.

Within thy downy bloom,
In covert sweet, there lie
Full many nests of care
To birds that course the sky.

The peesweep's fluttered cry,
And hasty wheeling wing,
The curlew's carol shrill,
That makes the echoes ring,

The anthem of the lark,
That soars with rapture proud,
And singeth of its joy
Above the summer cloud,

All hover o'er thy snow,
More dear than clover grass,
Then sink within thy down,
And let the breezes pass.

Nay, country maidens gay
Deft fingers will employ,
Who gather thee at eve,
And look for wedded joy ;

The while their pillows soft
They fill with snowy bloom,
And dream of earthly bliss
At rest upon thy plume.

Drink sunshine, cannach bloom !
Blithe be thy smile and gay !
The wedding bliss of human life
May come, but cannot stay !

DRIVING CLOUDS.

DRIVE on your way, ye darksome clouds !
Across the azure sky ;
Upon the moorland trail your shrouds,
And weep as ye pass by.

Your time is short, in haste ye go
O'er yonder hill and dell,
By ragged cliffs and rivers' flow,
And o'er the lonesome fell.

I've seen you east, I've seen you west,
Before, behind the sun,
Now driving hard, and then at rest,
When day his course had run.

Ye know the boldness of the morn
That overcomes the night,
And doth your countenance adorn
With blooms of glorious light.

Ye hover o'er the mountains brown,
And hear the sough afar
Of streams, that leap the rock adown
And flow by bush and scaur.

Now basking in the breast of noon
Your darkness turns to light,
Then, gathering around the moon,
Ye drape the queen of night.

The spring nigh fainting in the waste
Ye feed with dropping showers,
And pushing up, in gladsome haste,
Appear the merry flowers.

Ye clothe the thunder with your gloom,
And shoot forth lightnings dire,
As if the very crack of doom
Were setting earth on fire.

Then coming down in pouring rain
The rugged hills among,
Ye rush, and overwhelm the plain
With ruin swift and strong.

The forest trees borne on your wave
The bridges batter down,
And from your flood loud cries to save
Arise from those that drown.

At length your flood and fire are spent,
A rainbow spans the shower
That weeps, as if it did repent
The fury on before.

With pearls pure the grass is hung,
The songsters twitter mirth,
A breeze awakes, and straight unstrung
Your pearls drop to earth.

The nectar sinks into her breast,
And thirst with sweetness fills,
While ye retreat into your rest
Amid the craggy hills.

Aweary of the roughsome ride
On storm o'er hill and dell,
Ye hover o'er the mountain's side
And sleep upon the fell.

And then, mayhaps, the sun will break
Upon you in your dreams,
That ere from sleep you can awake
You vanish in his beams.

Thus Aaron-like ye lay aside
Your priestly robes, and die
Into the glories that abide
Within a sunlit sky.

THE OCEAN.

DREAD ocean breaking on the shore!
Thy fury will not rest,
Thy thunders never cease to roar,
Nor sighs to heave thy breast!

Thy bounds are wide, thy home is deep,
Rare treasures are with thee;
Then take thy rest, on fortune sleep!
Thou rich and mighty sea!

If aught be free, then thou art free,
Thy power girds every land ;
O who may read, thou ancient sea,
Thy story on the sand ?

Mayhaps thou dost recall the day,
When, as thy waves did roam
Around the world far astray,
God led thee to thy home.

Beneath the eye of morning fair
The mountain tops did rise,
Thy waters from their shoulders bare
Did leap as from the skies.

Ere then thy pace was laggard slow,
Stray waters o'er a plain,
Or muddy lake whose currents flow
With sluggish toil and pain.

But on that day God gathered thee
Thy living joy began,
When, by the hills from sloth set free,
Ten thousand rivers ran.

Then at the feet of many a hill
Thy streams rushed into one,
The dark unmeasured deep to fill,
And roll for ever on.

Thy march in music and in state
Wakes murmurs sweet and sad ;
Thou wailest with the desolate,
Rejoicest with the glad.

Oh! what confessions reach thy ear,
When, in the whirling wave,
Poor mortals, racked with guilty fear,
Sink in their closing grave!

They lie within thy forests deep,
Until the voice divine
Shall wake them from their dreamless sleep
Within thy darksome mine!

As easily controlled art thou
As dew on flowers that blow,
For Heaven's mandate's on thy brow
Which all thy depths must know.

Then he who knows his Lord and thine
May trust thy storm-heaved deeps,
As certain there of love divine
As where the primrose sleeps!

THE MOON.

THOU gentle moon! thy silver light
Blooms fair upon the brow of night,
And as it looks unto the earth
It soothes our grief and stills our mirth.

Thy light was faint while shone the sun,
And trembled till his race was run,
But in the dark thy fire breaks forth
Its radiance far from south to north.

Yet is it sweet, and soft, and calm,
Like snowy fleece of tender lamb,
That strays on hills bereft of light,
Save its own robe that dares the night.

In winter when the nights are long,
When winds are loud and tempests strong,
Thou rulest o'er night's angry brood
Of darksome clouds like ark on flood.

In summer time thy silver light
Gleams faint and far 'tween day and night,
A brief career from south to west,
While 'neath the north the sun doth rest.

The after light of sun gone down
Beyond the hills and moorland brown,
Thou blendest with thy silver ray,
And night becomes the ghost of day.

In Autumn when the golden grain
Is waving on each hill and plain,
Thou shinest forth in auburn light,
The radiant diadem of night.

Beneath thy beams the peasant works
With nervous power, the while he forks
The stooks of corn before the storm,
And bids the driver hurry home.

Across the dim and eerie fields,
When day at length to gloamin' yields,
The rattle of his waggon wheels
Through shades and through thy radiance steals.

Until with stacks the yard is full,
The farmer hails thy golden rule,
That ripens corn, and guides the wain
That creaking rolls along the plain.

Right glad is he to hail thy sway,
Who, after rambling all the day,
Must enter night without a home,
And through the realms of darkness roam.

Thou shinest through the riven cloud
And beamest on the tempest loud,
When driven hard with naked mast
The ship rides o'er an ocean vast.

Thy smile—the light of sun gone down—
Doth cheer the sailor woe-begone ;
The sign that day will come again,
And guide his bark across the main.

As oft as light beams on thy face,
Thou smilest on the human race :
Would God we were as true to show
To men around the truth we know !

TIGRIS AND EUPHRATÈS.

Upon Niphatès mount the silver snow
Shines clear and cold, while summer basks below,
Forth from his side two mighty rivers spring,
And with their music make the echoes ring.

Be-north the range Euphratès hails the day
Through shadows dim, and westward takes his way,
While Tigris on the south leaps into light,
And eastward speedeth as on wings of flight ;
Niphatès hears their voices loud and strong,
And trooping echoes lengthen out the song.

The mountain's breadth between, the rivers hear
Each other's music with a longing ear,
Yet come not nigh, but journey far apart,
In deserts drear that wear the love-sick heart.

For many a league Euphratès travels west,
In chase of setting suns with rosy crest,
Till, weary of the hunt, to south he turns,
And hies with ardour keen where Tigris burns,
For Tigris too, that rolled unto the dawn,
Has changed her course and southward now has gone.

Swift, swift they flow, and nearer still they come,
Soon will they meet, and love arrive at home.
Ah, vain desire ! love's course is seldom smooth,
Hope often breaks upon the rock of truth.

The mountain, envious of their coming bliss,
Rears up his rugged form 'tween that and this ;
Euphratès chafes against his iron side
In blinding foam to reach his Tigris bride.
Now roll they on, the mountain's form between,
The breezes tell their love, themselves unseen.

At length they pass beyond the mountain's range,
But then to love their hearts grow cold and strange.
Apart they go, their voices die away
In deserts wide, where breezes go astray;
Each in its deepset channel rolls along,
And bears through silence drear a lonely song.

Though love be dumb awhile it will not hide,
But tell its tale e'en over deserts wide.
Euphratès rising from his hollow bed
Sends forth bright streams that o'er the desert spread,
Until they blend their waves with Tigris deep,
And whisper of his love within her sleep.

In love-sick flow Euphratès feebler grows,
His waters sink as through the plain he goes,
Or wander in the search of Tigris fair,
To woo the sweetness that can kill despair.

She hears his voice, nor has an iron heart,
Forth from her bosom streams of love depart,
Across the plain they to her lover haste,
And bid him raise his head above the waste.

Their streams of mutual love have crossed the plain,
Now let them meet and end each other's pain,
No mountain now doth interrupt the scene,
The sun shines bright on all the space between.

Alas, too late! for both are now grown old,
And ere they meet salt seas their streams enfold;
But say not thou that love grows old and sear,
Its heart is warm and holds eternal cheer.

While through the sea their waters sadly roam,
With mingled tears they meet in sorrow's home;
Yet stout of heart they yield not to despair,
Nor lose their strength in unavailing care;
If now in death, in life they will embrace,
And through new land in bliss each other chase.

The rocks and sand from mountain and from plain
They bear along, and plunge into the main,
From age to age they labour night and day,
Fill up the sea with gravel and with clay,
Or boulders torn from bold Niphatès' side,
That choke the depths and drive away the tide.

Four thousand years they toil, and rear at last
A fertile land above the watery waste,
Through whose green meads they roll and fondly
meet,
No briny waters mingling with the sweet.

From league to league they roll along in joy,
Nor time nor distance can their bliss alloy.
Oh happy streams! whose woes and labours prove
The power of love can hills and seas remove!

THE HILL OF YOUNG.*

BROWN hill above the lochs,
  Asleep upon the moors,
Thy heart is all at rest,
  And time for thee endures!

What visits thou hast had
  Of spring in kirtle green,
Of summer's cannach snow,
  And autumn's purple sheen!

The sons of men grow old
  Who herded on thy braes,
Or sported in the sun,
  And heard the wild birds' lays.

The sunny locks of youth
  Are changed to hoary white,
And then they melt away
  Like cranreugh from thy sight.

The youth of human life
  Is heath upon thy head;
Now wears a purple bloom
  A season brief will shed.

All seasons deck thy brow,
  The gold of morn and even',
The beauties of the earth,
  And glories of the heaven.

* In Caithness, a few miles from Wick.

But thou abidest still,
While seasons come and go,
'Neath summer's rainbow wreath
And winter's drifting snow.

Like bloom of light in rain
They shine forth and they flee,
Or like the storm-wrought foam
That tosses on the sea.

Yet that on which they play,
In coat of russet brown,
Throws off the scaith of years,
And never crumbles down.

What years thou dost command,
Who hast no thought at all,
While men who thirst for time
In days but few must fall!

Thy name in truth accords
With thy enduring nature,
The same now as of old
In youthful form and feature.

In showers of flaky snow
The flocks of sea birds fly,
Across thy darksome face,
Beneath the azure sky.

The gurly clouds upheave
Their towering crests, and pour
The storm upon thy head,
To perish in the shower.

The gloomy clouds are spent,
The sun shines from the blue,
A breeze rides o'er the heath,
And spills thy silver dew.

It sinks within thy breast
To feed the wells within,
Or wanders down thy side
To leap o'er scaur and linn.

The shadows of the clouds
Grow deeper on thy face,
But soon they haste away
Where laughing sunbeams chase.

In thick midwinter hour
Old night abides with thee,
Within her tent of mist,
And hears the soughing sea.

What is it that she says
Of times long gone away,
When she o'er chaos ruled,
Nor ever feared the day?

Since time before thy birth
Old night can never sleep,
But speeds from land to land,
And o'er the girdling deep.

At crowing of the cock,
Or sounding of the horn,
She tucks her shades about,
And hastens from the morn.

Nor boast thou of thy years,
  Thy steadfast face to time,
For thou shall pass away,
  With all thy sweet wild thyme.

If thou hast known the surge
  Of ocean's briny wave
Beat sore upon thy head,
  And o'er thy bosom rave ;

And raised thy brow at last,
  Above the sea and plain,
To sit in quiet rest,
  And hail the sun and rain ;

Thy dwelling there, though long,
  Through years untold to thought,
Will have an end most sure,
  And thou return to nought!

The world itself must drift
  Into the hollow deep
Of yonder hungry past,
  Where shades of greatness sleep.

Yea, sun and moon and stars,
  Like flakes of silent snow,
Shall fall, and melt away
  Where time's broad waters flow !

To God the world seen
  Is young, and yet is old ;
Will soon be what has been,
  Its age and story told.

THE KING'S FOREST OF GELTSDALE.

FROM merry Carlisle I turned my steps
  Straight east by Brampton way,
Upon a gladsome morn in June,
  When all the earth was gay.

The wild rose decked the hedges green
  With blossoms red and white,
And threw upon the summer breeze
  A fragrance of delight.

They were unto the passers-by
  The flight of beauty frail,
The pleasure of a fleeting glance,
  A sweetness on the gale.

I looked abroad o'er field and wood,
  Where, hid and silent ran,
Unto my dull and distant ear,
  The summer waters wan.

Thus Eden doth meander on
  Between dry banks of gravel,
Like life within the lips of thirst,
  A pilgrimage of travail.

The Eden nor the Esk I see,
  Nor hear their waters flow,
Yet through the woody silence dim
  The streams to Solway go.

So, o'er the wide and various land
That men the world call,
Thought casts a glance where misty rays
On slumbering shadows fall.

It sees a form immense and dim,
Of hollow wood and fell,
But of the streams of life therein
Ah, little can it tell!

Yet there they flow, each in its path,
Deep worn through rock or sand,
And swift or slow they journey on
Across their breadth of land.

I look across the misty plain,
Where heat and radiance glow,
Unto the mountains high and brown,
Where red deer bounding go.

To south by west broad Skiddaw stands,
With comrade mountains high,
Be-guarding many a lovely lake,
Whose bosom holds the sky.

I turn me to the east and view,
With never failing joy,
The broad-backed moor, such as I knew
When I was but a boy.

That is the forest of the king,
And Geltsdale is the name;
What toil had he upon those moors,
What pleasure in the game?

Was much or nought I cannot say,
For men may seldom use
The pleasure which is called their own,
And they can daily choose.

To me it is a vision fair,
Replete with bliss unknown;
Ne'er toiled I there, nor aught have seen
But wavy moorlands brown.

Yet to my mind it doth contain
A thousand herd of deer,
By stream and lake, and leagues of fell,
The choice of royal cheer.

It brings to me long summers gone
Upon my native moor,
Where oft I wandered far and lone,
The wonder to explore.

I thought if I could climb the height
O'er which the sun arose,
I might behold the world's edge
Above its beetling brows.

But when I reached the height, the moor
Spread eastward out afar,
A pleasure land for hunting thought,
Blue vales from star to star.

And years on years I've travelled thus
Unto the morning east,
The joyous forest of the king
An unattainèd feast.

WETHERALL.

As I went out by Scotby town
An hour or two ere it was noon,
The wind was from the west and soft,
And in the blithesome month of June.

The wild kail threw its radiant bloom
Of shining gold upon the corn,
And made its verdure flush with joy,
Like braes that redden with the morn.

The cattle lay on clover lea,
And chewed the cud, unknown to care;
No thought had they how June would flit,
And winter strip the landscape bare.

Close by the way the foxglove stood,
In graceful form with silent bells;
Or was it that my ear was dull,
And could not hear their fairy tales?

Within these bells of purple red
The fairies' glove, each little hand,
What tales have they of sportive love,
Of creatures of the wonderland?

The honeysuckle twined the rose,
The sweet wild rose upon the thorn,
The thorn was green, and gay as aught
That summer sunshine could adorn.

Across the honeysuckle hedge
Unto his horse the ploughboy spoke ;
I saw him not, but heard his words,
That sharply on the breezes broke.

In angry haste he chode the horse,
His mind was on another theme,
And could not brook its froward ways
While he was feeding on his dream.

For, in the pauses of his talk,
A snatch of song he fondly threw
Into the whispering summer breeze,
That could not keep a thing it knew.

"My dark-eyed Sarah," thus he sung,
His heart o'erflowing from the lip,
His voice the honeysuckle shook,
Where bees did nectar sweetness sip.

It was the sweetness of the time,
The crowning season of the year,
When nature reached her utmost joy,
And man in love made hope his cheer.

I sped me on to Wetherall,
Bethought me on the fleeting hour,
How little joy earth gives to man,
How soon it 'scapeth from his power.

A burst of song 'tween vexing cares,
A hollow dream that mocks the eye ;
A rainbow form will fade ere noon,
And bid the storm o'ercast the sky.

Upon a height and fair to see,
Where all the winds may freely blow,
There stands the town of Wetherall,
Above where Eden's waters flow.

The roses were in perfect bloom
On thorny hedge and stony wall,
And summer found a royal seat
Upon the breast of Wetherall.

It hears the voice of Eden's wave
As down it flows by Corby Hall,
It holds the joy all earth has lost,
And speaks of that which weathers all.

It chased away the lowering cloud
That grew upon my summer sky,
And spoke of love that ever lives,
And triumphs when the flesh must die.

My God and Saviour! while I tread
In light and shade this wildered scene,
Still let Thy light and love be mine,
And be to me what Thou hast been!

Teach me to know and love the true,
And seek the joy Thou dost bestow,
Nor waste my strength in phantom chase
Of hollow joys disguising woe.

Then sure am I my steps will reach
The goodly height where Zion stands,
Above the banks where Eden flows
And bears its song through many lands!

PENTON LINNS.

On Liddel side the earth is red,
And hard the rock that beds the stream,
Deep are the pools the waves have made,
Where darkness mocks the noon-day beam.

Although its way be rough and wild,
The stream flows soft in drought of June,
Like fainting voice of thirsty child
In desert hot the sun at noon.

Yet gaily green the forest grows,
That strikes its roots into the bank;
Ah, well the strength of earth it knows
That wears such plumes of promise rank!

The oak, the ash, the elm tree,
The black thorn and the hazel brown,
The birch and rowan fair to see,
The banks with summer beauty crown.

The alder shades the panting wave,
That shallow wanders to the side,
Returning strength the waters gave
As on they went in swollen tide.

The holly and the Scottish fir,
The spruce so trim and larch so gay,
Maintain their life and beauty there,
In joy complete no want have they.

Where frost and flood cut deep and sore
The ivy binds the wounded brae,
The brackens wave o'er boulders hoar,
And o'er the cliffs sweet flowrets stray.

The rocks are crowned with bushes green,
Where blaeberries in secret grow,
That soon in autumn will be seen,
And many will their sweetness know.

The schoolboy in his random play
Will stain his lips with berries red,
And up and down through shadows stray,
In wayward motion fancy led.

And lasses there may deeper dye
The sweetness of their rosy lip,
When all the forests softly sigh
O'er cups where love would fondly sip.

But why such haste to antedate
The hour that comes with swiftness sure?
With time while present do thou mate,
And hold it while it may endure!

There grows the foxglove tall and straight,
Yet droops its head with fairy bells,
That tinkle in the ear of fate,
But what they say no mortal tells.

The bells that first come out in bloom
Are those hung nearest to the earth,
When one doth fade, a higher plume
Breaks out with bloom and fairy mirth.

Thus does the blossom higher rise,
And stretch its distance from the sod,
Until its head salutes the skies
With glory like to Aaron's rod.

Like to the bells, ye sons of men!
As fades the hope that's nearest earth,
Still higher blossom out again,
And give to God your harvest mirth!

The honeysuckle twines its arms
Around the brier wild and fair,
And blends its fragrance with the charms
Of rosy bloom that knows not care.

And ever and anon there come
Rare draughts that speak of hawthorn bloom,
The sweetest of all scents that roam,
Like spices from beyond the tomb.

What radiant bloom is gathered here,
Within the shadow of the wood,
This is the summer of the year,
Like that which God pronounced good.

Thus blooms the wood above the stream,
Above the rocks by chaos thrown,
Where prisoned waters darkly gleam
In dungeons hollowed by the stone.

So, happy they, where'er they be,
On any spot beneath this sun,
Who heaven's light and love can see,
And dwell where living waters run!

SNOW-DOUN ROCK.

BOLD is thy brow, O Snow-doun rock!
To Scotsmen ever dear,
Thou throne of right and liberty!
Where Wallace threw the spear.

The spear he threw, the sword he drew,
Proud foemen bit the clay,
Though many came, they were but few
Who ever got away!

Oppression and her minions went
Adown the river strong,
Or fell upon the trodden carse,
A woeful, stricken throng!

A friend into a traitor grown
Beguiled the hero's feet,
As lion through the flowery sward
Into a darksome pit.

Beguiled of arms and captive made,
Then given to his foes,
He braved their rage with courage true,
And death full-barbed with woes.

The haughty Edward, dark of soul,
And cruel in his hate,
Tore out the hero's living heart,
A hellish rage to sate.

His head cut off, and stalwart frame
Bequartered for each town,
Were hung as terrors o'er the gates,
To keep Old Scotland down.

She rose again in vengeful might,
The Bruce he led her on,
Until at Bannockburn he won
A glorious renown.

When Scotland burst her chains and led
Her forces to the fight,
The news brought Edward to the front,
At head of England's might.

His wrath supplied the strength that age
Had taken from his frame,
As north he rode in fiery haste,
The Scottish soul to tame.

The fever boiling in his soul
Exceeded to the blood,
He lay upon the bed of death,
And heard the Solway flood,

A shadow came and said to him,
Here is thy final spot,
Lay down thy bones on English soil,
For Scotland owns thee not!

Thereat he raged, and fumed, and swore
His very bones would go
Before the army of his son,
For Scotland's overthrow.

If Edward all alive and strong
Her spirit could not break,
Vain man to think that rattled bones
Would make her armies quake!

They laid the old king's bones at rest,
Their days of conquest done;
The young and living took the field,
And journeyed from the sun.

The flower of England gathered there,
And fighting men from France,
With tribes of Welsh and Irish kernes,
On Scotland's breast to prance.

In armour strong, with weapons keen,
The horsemen took the field,
Some thirty thousand men of war,
That shone with sword and shield.

With sword and spear the footmen came,
With bow and arrow true,
Full seventy thousand men I ween,
To match them were but few.

With horse and spear, with sword and bow,
A hundred thousand men,
Came marching up against the Bruce
And three times thousands ten.

The thirty thousand Scots that stood
With Bruce upon the field,
Had passed through many griefs and deaths,
And knew not how to yield.

To God they bowed the knee, and sought
His help against the hour,
When tyrants came in numbers great,
The right to overpower.

The English horsemen stout and bold,
Had thought to tread them down,
The bowmen shot their arrows keen,
To win a fresh renown.

But Scotland's breast refused to yield,
She stood the thunder's shock,
And England's flower of chivalry
Was mist on Snow-doun's rock.

Ah, what avails their numbers great,
In choicest arms bedight,
With all the courage of their race,
Rejoicing in its might!

The horsemen reel, turn back and flee,
The rider and his steed
Find end to flight in gloomy pits,
The maw of death to feed.

The foot into disorder thrown,
Are slaughtered by the sword,
The swift are overta'en at last
And death is flight's reward.

Full thirty thousand foemen fell
Upon the bloody sod,
A host of seventy thousand fled,
For sweet life took the road.

In pell-mell haste they hurry home,
In terror all dismaying,
On hearts that 'scaped the avenging sword
A dreader foe is preying.

Let tyrants plunge to snatch the cup
Gleams gold beneath the wave,
And find the gleam that led them down
Shines o'er oppression's grave.

Let tyrants for the goblet dive,
In down draught of the eddy,
The land is free as is the breeze
That canters o'er Ben Ledi!

O Scotland to thy name be true,
Let Freedom with thee stay,
Maintain thy rights so dearly won
By heroes now in clay!

Thy Wallace gave his heart for thee,
And Bruce the bloody sweat
Of years of toil, through shades of death,
To victory complete.

Woe-worth the son that would defame
Thy heroes of the past!
No Scot is he, but foundling vile,
Sea weed on Albyn cast.

The knaves that could not break thy sword
Would steal it in thy sleep,
Yea snatch the treasures of thy toil,
And all thy glories reap.

O let not Mammon's flash and greed
  Beguile thee of thy glory,
The love of God and righteousness,
  The spirit of thy story!

Though stout thy heart as Snow-doun rock,
  Trust thou no ancient fame!
A very Samson's strength departs
  Who slumbers in his shame.

May God preserve and bless thee still,
  Thy hills ne'er want the dew,
And in thy sons and daughters fair
  Thy youth and strength renew!

A NEST IN WINTER IN A PLANE TREE.

THE wind is keen, the blast is strong,
  That hurries o'er the naked lea,
And roars the strippen woods among,
  Like moaning billows of the sea.

It is the bleak mid-winter time,
  When desolation holdeth sway,
When morn is chill with hoary rime,
  And storms o'ercast the fleeting day.

On lonely heath and meadow green
  Are bloom and scent of summer gone,
Naught where the sweet wild thyme hath been,
  Or butter cup in gold that shone.

Hath summer thus but writ her name
With playful finger on the sand,
To lose the fragrance of her fame
When stormy winter lifts his hand?

He lifts his hand, and swings it round,
Storms startle 'neath his rugged fist,
His breath doth freeze the naked ground,
Or drive athwart the snow and mist.

Yet can he not blot out the name
Of summer from the face of earth,
He but reveals her pleasant fame,
Lays bare the secrets of her mirth.

Upon a plane tree high and bare
Is perched a nest that holdeth fast,
Nor aught of summer lingers there,
But yon lorn nest that rides the blast.

In summer green I knew it not,
With joy at home yet all unseen,
Now all may see the naked spot
Where happiness hath tented been.

Such is the lot of man on earth,
Possessing with a blind man's hold,
A gift that would have wakened mirth
Could he have seen the shining gold!

But when the gift takes wings and flies
Afar to west where day hath gone,
The blind receives his sight, and cries
For loss of what was ne'er his own.

Yet tells that nest another tale,
Of brood the harrier never saw,
Nor caused the parent birds to wail
The havoc of the robber's claw!

Throughout the summer long and fair,
Full many a nest was found and torn,
By eyes and hands would nothing spare,
Who plucked the brood from shielding thorn.

In grassy folds of Nature's plaid,
In secret dimples of the brae,
Deep in the heart of woodland shade,
And open lea where shines the day.

The joy of birds is turned to woe,
Their homes of peace outraged and torn,
The gladsome strain no more they know,
But in the silence dumbly mourn.

But no such grief o'ertook thy strain,
Thou merle on the topmost bough!
When summer green be-clad the plain
Which holds thy nest in tempest now.

Thy April song shook off the rain,
That glittered on a glossy wing,
The day was brighter with thy strain,
And man took heart to hear thee sing.

Thy hope was true, and joy anon
Did sojourn with thee in thy nest,
In shade secure, by all unknown
Who had a mind to curse the blest.

Ye happy birds! where have ye gone,
With all your brood of love and care,
Your song that met the rosy dawn,
And warbled in the gloamin' air!

Haunt ye the scenes that shelter gave
Throughout the gladsome summer day,
But now are bare when tempests rave,
And all your former joys betray?

But bluff and stern though winter be,
He meaneth not to do you harm,
He spares your nest upon the tree,
And droppeth pearls in the storm.

The hailstones will not break your wing,
Nor hunger slay you in the wood,
From garners, pity crumbs will bring,
And cheer you when the times are rude.

Then fear ye not the naked trees,
By winter thrashed and tempest tost,
There's mercy in the angry breeze,
And wisdom in the biting frost.

The train of winter soon will pass,
His wreathing snow and blinding sleet,
Up through his skirts will spring the grass,
And flowers around his frozen feet.

The tree now bare will yet grow green,
And you may find your nest again,
Renew the joy that once has been,
And revel in a sweeter strain.

And man, like thee, an exile is
  Within the winter of his year,
Outside the wall of former bliss,
  Exposed to blasts in deserts drear.

Yet e'en for him there is a tree
  O'ertops the wall and angel's sword,
And some have eyes that gladly see
  The nest of hope therein embowered!

A WINTER WIND.

WINTER wind, O winter wind!
  I vow thy step is eerie,
Whistling out and whistling in,
  O but thou art drearie!

There's not a door in all the house
  Thou hast not set a howling,
With quavers of a gruesome voice,
  As wolves about were prowling.

O winter wind, O winter wind!
  Thou art a wight uncanny,
Driving o'er the world blind,
  And striking sore on many.

Thou wreckest ships upon the sea,
  When sails are torn in pieces,
And broken falls the mast of tree,
  While mortals feed the fishes.

Their spirits rise above the wave,
And lodge them in thy bosom,
To prick thee on, and make thee rave
To madness fell and woesome.

Thy secrets are too great for thee,
Thy sleep of them will murmur ;
For deeds of darkness done at sea
Where wilt thou find a charmer ?

Ah, weary are the feet that run
With such a troop of sorrow,
And vainly journey with the sun,
To seek for rest to-morrow !

As Cain within the land of Nod
With weary step did wander,
From east to west and far abroad,
As streams in plains meander ;

So thou dost traverse earth's broad field,
And ocean's billows gruesome ;
But little balm the search may yield
To sooth thy aching bosom !

FROM FREUCHIE TO MASPY DEN.

It was upon a winter morn,
Was after wind and rain,
When rooks were sporting in the sky,
Above the Freuchie plain.

I took my staff and journeyed west,
In search of Falkland green,
And thought to spend some fleeting hours
Upon an ancient scene.

I saw the royal Lomond hill,
In coat of speckled snow,
With fir tree plaid around his breast,
And mist upon his brow.

I came unto a village small,
With roofs of mossy green,
It wore the still and ancient look
Of forms that long have been.

Although the roofs were old, I trow
The life within was young,
For out there came a maiden gay,
Who had a merry tongue.

I questioned her what name it bore,
And then she told me straight,
Of Falkland this is New Town, Sir,
As if of recent date.

She knew not that the roof was old,
Whose heart was young and gay,
The winter breeze blew idly by,
For her the time was May!

The New Town is unhappy name
For aught that mortals build,
The breeze of time effaceth soon
The features of the child.

The name of youth is not for earth,
'Tis but a phantom dream,
A ray that hasteth o'er the heath,
A meteoric gleam.

But further west a little way,
To Falkland town I came,
And through a narrow, crooked street
Unto a house of fame.

Before me stood a palace, gray
As weathered stone could be,
And clasped in ivy's tendrils fine
As green as any tree.

I entered in and saw the rooms
Where kings of old had dwelt,
Where courtiers' hopes of greatness came
Before the king and knelt.

The oaken ceiling fine and strong,
Still wearing thistle bloom,
Looks down on empty floors where oft
Young beauty graced the room.

Fair forms have flitted up and down
Upon those empty boards,
Where majesty hath smiled and frowned,
Spoke love and called for swords.

The deepest passions of the heart,
The holiest and the best,
Entangled with the bait of hell,
Beat there in many a breast.

Through festive room and corridor,
  Through stairway dark and cold,
The minstrel's strain of love hath poured,
  And yearnings deep hath told.

Then maidens eyes grew soft with love,
  And silent told their pain,
While lovers took to heart the sign,
  Caught courage from the strain.

The strain is gone, who can reclaim
  Its sweetness from the wind,
Whose freezing blast upon the moor
  The streamlet's song doth bind?

Deserted halls! had ye a tongue
  What deeds ye would rehearse?
'Tis well the past is deaf and dumb,
  To save us from a curse.

And yet, mayhaps, ye too could tell
  How royal poets sung,
How James the First and James the Fifth
  Had spoke their mother tongue.

How they rehearsed the life and wit,
  The humour and the fun,
And courage of the yeomen true
  Whose hearts their ways had won.

And somewhere nigh the Lomond hill
  Was "Christ's kirk of the grene,"
Besouth the mount on Leslie bank,
  Or here at Falkland seen.

And though the palace standing now
Was not existent then,
An older stood upon the site
When James the Fifth came ben.

And James the Fifth from sports on green
Relief would often borrow,
To soothe the heart at last laid low
And broke for very sorrow.

For gambols gay are feckless balm,
Can scarcely cool the skin,
And cannot touch the fire of grief,
That smoulders deep within.

As fire that kindles Solway moss
Will feed itself in gloom,
And down into the very clay
A pathway will consume ;

So tidings of the battle lost,
Where Solway's tides resound,
Took fire upon the royal life,
And burned it to the ground.

I know not if a sadder fate
The Duke of Rothesay knew,
Cast down into a dungeon deep,
By hands of Satan's crew.

Tradition points to yonder wall
Above the garden plot,
O'erhung with ivy fresh and green,
As that accursèd spot.

Its bushy head is wet with dew,
That sparkles with the day,
Its sides are clothed with summer robes,
As if 'twere always May.

But underneath its hidden foot,
Behold a loathsome lair
Of filthy horrors of the night,
A dungeon of despair.

They took the prince in youth's attire,
And threw him in that den,
To lie and famish in the clay,
Nor see the light again.

At mercy's call a maiden came,
And, through a chink in wall,
She pushed her hand, and scattered meal
Upon his lips to fall.

The manna of her kindness fell
Around him in the gloom,
And bade him hope an angel good
Would keep at bay his doom.

But when the governor had found
She nursed the prisoner's breath,
Although she was his daughter true
He put her to the death.

Another maiden sought the den,
To soothe a life distrest,
As through a reed he drew the milk
Of pity from her breast.

She too was caught and suffered death,
The door of hope was sealed,
Until his soul broke through the flesh,
And unto heaven appealed.

Farewell! thou palace green and gray,
Where age is wed with youth,
And nature shields the child of art
From ruin's gnawing tooth.

I hie me west to Maspy Den,
To hear the burnie sing,
That trips along apart from men,
The peasant as the king.

I journeyed up the water side,
Upon a winding way,
Went to and fro across the stream,
And through the wood did stray.

Now underneath the ground it went,
Through darkness could not last,
For into light it came again,
Where waters rippled past.

The ferns spread out their braided leaves
Upon the wasted steep,
Their greenness kept 'neath dripping rocks,
That evermore did weep.

The water-falls came down in foam,
Hard driven from above,
To gather clearness in the stream,
And leisure there to rove.

The path was strewn with faded leaves,
And on the seeping braes
The treasure of decay was spread,
That spoke of other days.

The trees were bare, and not a bird
Did chirp in all the wood,
Nor sound of music there was heard,
Except the linn in flood.

Right o'er the middle of a brow
Of curving rock it went,
And through a channel strait and worn
Its waters onward sent.

The rock is hollowed underneath,
You walk the curvèd way,
And pass behind the water-fall,
Besprinkled with the spray.

There shoots an arrow from the bow
That never leaves the string,
And yet it travels far away,
And through the woods doth sing.

The waters leap from rock to rock,
Through Maspy Den they go,
Nor linger they in all the Howe
Who into Eden flow.

And yet the stream doth ever fall,
The linn is there for aye,
And doth unto the echoes call
In thunder night and day.

Like to that water-fall is man,
While chained to earth he be,
His bounding life held fast, the while
His thoughts go out to sea.

Through many a den they winding go,
Through wood and daisy lea,
Through gorges dark and sunny plains
Unto eternity.

And yet the man is here, and tugs
Within his length of chain,
Which holds him fast unto the rock,
From which he springs amain.

Farewell! thou bounding bow of foam,
Thy years are many yet;
For thee it will be morn I ween
When night is at my gate!

My path is through this winter wood,
Will be thy summer bower,
And o'er the heights of driven snow
Lights up the gloamin' hour.

Yet is my home afar to south,
By "Christ's kirk of the grene,"
And summer there I hope to find
As fair as thou hast seen.

THE RIVER FLEET.

NOW, whether in thy race,
Why go at such a pace?
Careering Fleet!
Thy way is not so long,
Where birds the woods among
Do warble sweet.

Nay, hurry not away
From mountains brown and gray,
Where couch the deer,
And gor-cocks birk-a-birr,
And o'er the heather whir
With startled fear.

Then sport thee yet awhile,
The speeding hours beguile
On Cairnsmore's breast!
It is thy mother's lap,
Whose folds would thee enwrap
And kiss to rest.

So jink about the hill,
And take of love thy fill
For one long day!
Thou soon wilt reach the glen,
And wind through many a den,
Ere morning gray.

Take note of what you see,
Of scaur and mount and tree,
And primrose sweet!
The vision will not last,
The beauty soon be past,
For thee so fleet!

Upon the pebbles sing,
And on the boulders fling
Thy snowy foam!
In eddies turn again
Thy footsteps from the main,
Where salt waves roam!

Where thou dost leap the rock,
As if the thunder broke
From lips of woe,
Dive deep into the linn,
Beneath the deaving din,
And cease to flow!

Go! play with ancient trout,
Their coves scour in and out,
And make them run,
With thee in darkness deep,
Where night doth take her sleep,
Nor fear the sun!

Beneath Castrámont steep,
Thy waters closely keep
Beside his feet,

And hear the cushat dove
A whispering to his love
In accents sweet!

In fir tree grove he stands,
Looks over dell and sands
Of tossing sea;
The snow-white gulls have come,
And o'er his summit roam,
To meet with thee.

Now listen what they say:—
Return, and with us play
Round this green steep;
For soon o'er pallid clay
Thy troubled waves will stray
Into the deep!

But linger as thou may,
Thine is a passing day,
An arrow's flight;
For ah! thy waters speed,
And meet without remede
The salt sea's might.

Pass on in growing strength,
And meet the sea at length
In curling flood,
Between the castle old
Of Cardoness so bold
And Cally wood!

I hear the hooting owl,
And sprites of darkness prowl
Above the deep,
The while thy soughing stream,
Beneath the faint moonbeam
Doth sorely weep.

As on the Fleet did roll,
Away, foreboding soul!
It said to me,
My race is from the hill,
I journey with good will
To meet the sea.

The voice that gave me birth,
And made me spring with mirth
From flinty rock,
The same hath said to me,
Go forth and meet the sea,
Nor fear the shock!

The hand that holds the hill
Commands the sea at will,
His law is mine;
And whereso'er I go,
In song my waters flow,
Nor bliss may tine.

What though the sea be wide,
And trouble rule the tide
Makes rough my road,

I yet may see the sun,
And shall forever run
As pleaseth God.

So take thy way, frail man,
Thy name and nature scan
With searching eyes,
And let thy footsteps go
Beneath the gladsome glow
Of sunlit skies!

For fleeter far art thou,
Than any stream I know
Haunts hill or grove;
Then hasten toward day,
Far south, beneath whose ray
Glow deeps of love!

A STORM.

ON Tuesday the eleventh day,
December eighteen eighty three,
From Gatehouse, west, I took my way,
Fair Anwoth kirk and yaird to see.

The walls were roofless, but were green
With ivy and with ferns, that grew
Between the stones as they had been
In shady dell of honey dew.

The graves lay round about as close
As shrunken human forms could lie,
The stones stood thick as grass that grows
Beneath a dropping, sunny sky.

There lay the infant of a day,
And sire could boast a hundred years;
Chill winter's snow and dew of May
In death's deep bosom mixed their tears!

What nameless sorrows slumber there,
Where weepers with the wept-for rest,
Released from pleasure and from care
Of things they feared or loved the best!

The dell is green, within the shield
Of hills that guard it east and west,
And blighting winds ne'er touch the field,
With light and dew of heaven blest.

Beneath that sod do martyrs sleep,
Whose blood the cruel Grierson shed;
Their souls rejoice, and yet will reap
The rising of the blessed dead.

Around these walls the dead proclaim
The terrors of the broken law;
Within was preached the precious name
Of Him who saves from death and woe.

Long since the strains of Rutherford
In silence dim have died away,
The thorn is bare, and fled the bird
That sang upon the blossomed spray!

The form is gone, the voice is still,
  His step on earth you trace no more,
The eye is quenched that light did fill,
  And glimpses gave of heaven's shore.

Yet is his memory ever dear
  To those whose joy is in the Lord ;
His words abide, and saints will cheer
  When rust is all the tyrant's sword.

Yon granite spire on Boreland hill,
  Like giant spear on end set high,
Is named for him whose upright will
  With fond affection sought the sky.

I climbed the hill adorned with rocks,
  With darkling gorse, and tuftlets brown
Of rush and bracken, where the flocks
  Pursue their pasture up and down.

And where the dun herds of the hill
  At leisure stand upon the brae,
Or in the hollow feed their fill
  Ere night, and chew the cud till day.

The air was still, and darkling grew
  As by the monument I stood,
While high in heaven the storm did brew,
  And frowned on moor and ocean's flood.

I homeward went across the Fleet,
  When shapeless dusk came o'er the land,
And chaos from his cavern seat,
  To roll himself upon the sand.

As he came out so I went in,
Shut to the door behind my heel,
While he began to make a din,
And through the forest roar and reel.

I sat me down before the fire,
Nor thought me of the rushing crowd
Of lawless spirits in their ire
Were gathering into tempest loud.

A few short hours had come and gone,
The while I thought in dreamy mood,
The place had bield like cove 'neath stone,
Where trouts deride the rising flood.

Then out into the street I went,
And in the house of Gaius passed
Some two hours more to heart's content
That, touched with envy, time sped fast.

As homeward I returned again,
The gusty winds at corners strove,
Then joined their strength, and sped amain
As rustling up the street they drove.

I entered in and shut the door
As ten was striking in the clock,
Whereat the blast did louder roar,
On house and tree more fiercely broke.

The chimney cans fall fast, and batter
The roof from rigging to the eaves,
The slates fall out amid the clatter,
That inmates' ears with terror deaves.

The cans and slates come tumbling down,
And pave the streets with smash of ruin,
A demon dark broods o'er the town,
And from his jaws a wreck is spewin'.

Around the kirk trees tall and strong,
That graced the walls with grateful screen,
And shelter gave to mavis' song
In summer when the woods were green.

Are taken by the top and torn
From lowly house in earth's deep breast,
Their roots uncovered to the morn,
And severed from their bed of rest.

One mighty tree with branches strong
Had room to stand and grow on high,
But none to fall and lie along
Beneath the blasts that scour the sky.

The homes of men stood 'neath its bield,
That broke the blasts from year to year ;
But nothing of an earthly shield
Is reckoned on without a fear.

The blast came down with vengeful might,
Crash went the tree with groan and scream,
Through rigging sheer it bore downright,
And stuck midway, a stronger beam.

Beneath that roof a youthful pair
Lay fast asleep with their first born,
Unknown the tumult in the air
And broken house until the morn.

The storm came rushing up the street,
A mustering roar of furies fell,
That nearer came and fiercer beat,
And tore like fiends let loose from hell.

Thus raged it all throughout the night,
And through the early hours of morn,
Then vision came, and brought to light
The houses stript and forests torn.

Some say the fittest aye survive,
Most true if it will be confest
That not the strongest longest live,
Nor gnarled fall before the best.

The spacious beech with honours spread,
Kept grateful shade around its feet,
While summer shone upon its head,
And herds were panting in the heat.

Caught rudely by the blast is thrown,
With root upheaved a fathom deep,
Whose bleeding arms hold rock and stone,
Straight in the face of ruin's sweep.

The red bole of the Scottish fir,
And elbowed arms that stood on guard,
Against the bicker and the birr
Of tempests driving keen and hard,

Struck by the angry blast that flies
Across the wild and empty moor,
Falls down with groans that pierce the skies,
And charge with dread the midnight hour.

The gorcock, startled with the sound,
Upspringing whirs upon the blast,
Then like an arrow seeks the ground,
To fold his wing in heath at last.

The oak that stood upon the rock,
And every seam with roots did fill,
And round about the knoll did lock,
As if with netted bars of steel,

And held aloft its broad-browed head,
Grew green with each returning spring,
And vocal with the songs that fled
Into the past on silent wing,

Snapt from his seat, falls down amain
Into the roadway hard and dark,
The wall with him, a tumbling rain
Of boulders, makes the echoes hark.

I've seen a lean and scranky tree
Outride the blast that felled the oak ;
Nor strength nor beauty can there be
That things despisèd may not mock.

As I passed through the Cally wood,
In sombre light of afternoon,
What wounds were there by tempest rude
Would crave the balm of many a June!

The patriarchs of the forest lay
Upon the ground their honours low,
Across the lawn or chariot way,
And felt the axe's biting blow.

The avenues were thickly spread
With trees in fallen disarray ;
Scarce aught but birds that fly o'erhead,
Or squirrels, there could find a way.

I got into the open green,
To Barhill wood went soft and slow,
And travelled through the wildered scene,
Where moaned the hill for sons laid low.

There lay the ash, the oak and fir,
And many a tree was nameless then,
When pheasants rose and flew with birr
Through gloamin' dim beyond my ken.

Some trees would not uprooted be,
Were snapt in twain or splintered through ;
The blast broke like a surging sea,
That mined, and swept, and overthrew.

With many a wound the hill is sore,
Her sons lie heavy on her breast,
Their groanings pierce her to the core,
No balm has she to woo to rest.

The blast replied :—" Mourn not the hill !
Great store has she of balsams good,
With time she will forget her ill,
When round her grows another wood.

For time is on her fruitful side,
Now withers but grows green in May,
While human life is but one tide,
Once touches land then ebbs for aye !

As I rode on the Atlantic sea,
  Struck deep my spurs into its sides,
O how I heaved and plunged with glee,
  And foamed the lips of angry tides!

They made them graves all round about,
  But could not drag the rider in,
I carried on the dismal rout,
  And they grew hoarse with horrid din.

They raised their arms and claws of spray,
  As if to seize a thing of form,
I left the wolves, and men their prey,
  Whose ships were sinking in the storm.

At times I paused and drew a breath,
  And heard the sough of wave on wave,
With boom of guns foreseeing death,
  And pleading ransom from the grave.

Were aught of man or heart in me,
  When that lorn sound was heard at night
Beseech the sky, the land, and sea,
  I would have stayed my fatal might!

But on I go o'er land and sea,
  And darkness is my royal time,
I wreck the ship and break the tree,
  And blast the bloom of every clime.

As I went up Lochryan way,
  And eerie whistled through Stranraer,
A ship had just sunk in the bay
  Beyond the light of sun or star.

Some nineteen souls went down I trow,
But two were spared the dayless dell,
An elder blast had struck the blow,
And I am here the tale to tell."

Away! wild blast! but know thy might
Is bridled by the hand of God!
Though blind thy stroke in darkling night,
He sees who wields thee as his rod.

Away! wild blast! thou can'st not break
The slumber deep in Anwoth vale,
No voice of thine can ever wake
The ear of death to hear thy tale!

Another's voice more dread than thine
Thy darkness rules and darker death;
To Him I would my ear incline,
And serve Him while I draw my breath.

And when in death I sleep at last,
By Christ himself may I be kept!
All sin and grief forever past,
My dust secure where Jesus slept!

A morning will at last come round
And chase the shadow from yon dell,
And more than echoes will resound
In answer to the trumpet peal.

Then when the dead arise to greet
Another light than mortals see,
May we with joy Christ's glory meet,
And welcome immortality!

A WINTER NIGHT.

A CLEAR star light
Rides o'er the night,
  High up where shines the moon,
But lower down
The shadows frown,
  And winds through plantings croon.

Where meets the sky
With mountain high,
  The brow of great Cairn Harrow,
The snow gleams cold
Where clouds are rolled,
  And light from shade doth borrow.

The wind drives high,
The forests sigh
  The loss of comrades strong
By tempest stroke
Torn from the rock,
  To fall in ruin's throng.

The sough of Fleet,
With naked feet
  Upon her stony path,
Doth mourn the woods
Once crowned her floods,
  Laid low by tempest's wrath.

Dark is the vale
Has felt the gale
  Within her bosky bosom,
But spring will bind
The wounds unkind
  And sew those gashes ruesome.

The hills are light,
With snow are white,
  Though clouds their robe be-darken,
But brighter far
The moon and star
  At heaven's gate that hearken.

Should day forsake,
And gloom o'ertake
  The valley of my life,
Should storms break out
With dreadful rout,
  And rend my house with strife ;

Then may I go
To hills of snow
  That bend not to the storm ;
Yea higher rise
Unto the skies,
  Where winter cannot harm.

THE BARLEY FIELD.

THE sun shines through the belt of wood
That crowns the height upon the west,
And golden light doth gently brood
Upon the bearded barley's crest.

With drooping head to ripeness grown,
It silent rests in stilly eve,
Like pensive age when life's nigh gone
That o'er the past doth dumbly grieve.

It wears a pale and silvery cast
That blushes into modest gold,
As if afraid to show at last
The beauty makes the reaper bold.

To east and south the stalk is brown,
And weanèd from the breast of earth ;
The grain is ripe for cutting down
Before the reaper's ringing mirth.

On higher ground unto the west
A greenness blendeth with the gold,
Beneath the shade of woodland crest,
Where clay is hard and stiff and cold.

Yet will the reaper come and take
The green beside the ripened ear,
Till not a lonely stalk will shake
Above the furrows shorn and bare.

And when the field of human life
To ripeness doth begin to glow,
And ceaseth all the joyous strife
When spring and summer breezes blow,

How seldom 'tis that all is gold,
In south and east, in north and west,
Some parts are hard and stiff and cold,
And hold aloft an unripe crest.

Yet comes the reaper to the field,
Nor turns aside from greenness raw;
Unto his scythe the whole must yield,
Bound in his sheaf with every flaw.

THE NEW MOON ABOVE GLENLEE.

An August eve cold blew the wind
O'er Cairnsmore high and deep Glenhoul;
Its northern breath passed through my mind
As on the Molloch I did stroll.

Blue clouds were up above the hills,
Some laid at rest, some towering high,
With ragged peaks o'er gloomy ghylls,
While soaring through an orange sky.

The early summer bloom was gone
From whin and broom upon the grove,
The scythe had cut the clover down,
And nought was left but withered hay.

A few days past in swath it lay,
With flowers in prime on July's breast,
While tripping maidens tuned the hay,
Evoking fragrance sweetly blest.

Those days of sun and azure pure,
That brooded o'er the lap of earth,
Too fair they were, nor could endure,
Like lambs that die, repenting birth.

Dark grew the sky with heavy clouds,
The crashing thunder rolled through heaven,
Down came the rain and rose the floods,
That sped through gloom by lightning riven.

But after days of wind and rain,
The clouds rose up and bore along,
The summer bloom was off the plain,
In haste to join the cuckoo's song.

I felt as if life's bloom were gone,
A naked and a tuneless tree,
And hope descended from her throne,
Had gone to exile yont the sea.

But as mine eye with wistful gaze
Looked over Ken to Craig of Dee;
And westward over heathy braes,
The new moon shone o'er old Glenlee.

Her silver bow of fainting light
Shone pure and trembling in the clouds,
And brighter grew as dusky night
Be-draped the world with her shrouds.

Like sickle keen she cut her way
  Through scouts of darkness driving past,
Until she sank beyond Millyea,
  And o'er Loch Dee her silver cast.

Beneath an orange fringe of sky
  The Rhinns of Kells in purple lay,
While through Glenkens with gentle sigh
  The winds blew near and far away.

The moon will shine with growing light,
  And coming nights will fill her horn,
While heather bloom will glad the sight
  That views the hills in autumn morn.

She had her time of darkness deep,
  In wandering blind the world around,
Wherein she wished for dreamless sleep,
  Beyond the fear of haste's hell-hound.

At length she sees the sun far west,
  His light cheers up her lonely face,
She swims the wave for islands blest,
  In track of day she holds the chase.

Thus hold thy course thou pilgrim man!
  Though darkness now begirds thine eyes,
Light in the west thou yet may'st scan,
  In summer lands with fairer skies!

THE OLD YEW TREE OF FORTINGALL.

GLENLYON! fair, and sweet, and lone,
Thy dream is pleasant in the sun,
Where, 'tween the shades from mountains thrown,
Thy silver waters eastward run.

Thy stream seems one of four was wont
To flow by Eden's blissful braes,
Since led astray, now leads the hunt
Of pleasure o'er these moorland ways.

There grows a tree upon thy breast,
An offshoot from the tree of life,
By weight of years is not distrest,
Nor broken by fell winter's strife.

Through ashes of the ages dead
Its root strikes deep, and gathers might,
To shoot broad banners overhead,
At noon may form a bower for night.

Thou ancient tree! thy bough is green,
Unbleached by breath of wasting years,
Though thou two thousand years hast seen
Have buried crowds of hopes and fears!

Thy bough is green, nor winter knows,
Spring finds in thee a cosy bower
Against the blast that bitter blows,
The blinding sleet and hailstone shower.

When Caledonian heroes stood
The shock of Rome's proud foaming wave,
And backward sent the growling flood
Like fangless lion to his cave.

Thy stem was young and full of sap,
Thy shadow spread upon the sward,
A nursling in Glenlyon's lap,
That grew in spite of fire and sword.

The Roman axe rung in the glens
With bounding stroke against the oak,
The Roman fire climbed up the bens,
Devouring till it reached the rock.

The fire shot far its fatal gleam,
But came not nigh to scorch thy head,
That rose to music of the stream
Through nameless summers long since dead.

The woods have grown and fallen down
Beneath the breath of fickle time,
Whose smile still hardens to a frown,
Like summer dew to winter rime.

Thus many generations lie
Of men and trees beneath the heath,
Once nursed by clouds and shining sky,
Now resting in the breast of death.

But that yew tree still standeth fast,
And guards its shadow broad and round
Against the sun and eke the blast,
A stalwart stag defies the hound.

Nay, there the hound is fast asleep,
Old time at rest in summer bower,
That o'er his slumber watch doth keep,
Nor grieves the flight of parting hour.

So time is kind to that old tree,
Where he doth rest himself at noon,
And hear the hum of busy bee
Float o'er him in the month of June.

A century of years to thee
Is like the flight of winter day,
From quiver of eternity
An arrow strung and shot away!

How sweet thy shade in summer noon
To pilgrim into slumber cast,
While 'mid thy branches rustling croon
The memories of a distant past!

Yet may I not approach too near,
To play with time or sleep with thee,
Deep draughts of years thou drinkest here,
Thy horn is planted in the sea.

Yet no such sea invites my lip,
But shallow cup and full of sorrow,
That I must take it sip by sip,
If I should ever see to-morrow.

Between two worlds thou hast stood,
Like Noah 'twixt the old and new,
Who saw the one swept by a flood,
Till from the waves another grew.

He saw the ancient pass away,
The new-born son come in his stead,
But now to thee the young is gray,
The son is hasting to the dead.

For thou didst close the dim-grown eye
Of heathendom when Christ did come,
Thy branches moaning with the sigh
Of demons driven forth to roam.

And that new world was once a child
Thy fingers tickled 'neath the chin
With sportive glee, the while it smiled,
Or danced and leaped like any linn,

Is now as grave as winter grown,
Laid out to sleep upon the hill,
His lips as cold as any stone,
And silent as the frozen rill.

I may not linger thus with thee,
Whose sight e'en worlds cannot endure,
O'er whom the silent ages flee,
Like sunbeams o'er a changeless moor!

Thou treader of the grapes of years!
My cluster spare, for it is small,
And crushed would only give some tears
Of bitterness on earth to fall!

With rising breeze thy branch may play,
But not the drop of trembling dew;
One gust, it bursts, and is away,
So 'twere with me to sport with you!

For draughts of time are sport to thee
Prove death unto the sons of men,
So, from thy presence let me flee,
And haste from this enchanted glen!

BEN MORE IN MULL.

THE sun came o'er the hills of Lorn,
And shone on Oban bay,
Through fleecy clouds that veiled the morn
He brought an April day.

Stretched out with wind the goats-hair clouds
Swung bleaching in the sun,
In silent motion, like the shrouds
Of ship that speedeth on.

The wind was from the west, and spoke
Of storm it soon would bring;
Yet hours might fly before it broke
The sunshine on the wing.

Across the bay stood Kerrera,
Brown heights and dimples green;
But yesterday I crossed, and saw
Far round a wondrous scene,

Of mountain tops, in distance him
That shone with speckled snow,
Where radiant day the peaks did limn
With gleam that jewels know.

Unmoved by Corryvrechan's roar
The Paps of Jura stood,
The while in frenzied mood he swore,
And laboured with the flood.

His bands were strong, he could not break
What held him to the rocks,
Or he would rise and quickly shake
The sea-weed from his locks.

Then he would hasten to the land,
Where deer, a thousand told,
Have forest deep at their command
Between the Paps of gold.

Between the mountain of the Sound
And higher mount of Gold,
The Paps of Jura, blessed ground,
His life would ne'er grow old !

In vain he cries, throws up his arms,
And beats the wind with rage,
Or gives his thunder to the storms,
Naught can his grief assuage.

He robbed the mountains of their gold,
Their virgin jewels rare ;
Swift pleasure past, now grief untold,
The fury of despair !

He may not breast those hills again,
Where at the hunter's horn
The dun deer startle with the strain,
Their antlers touched with morn.

Within the east Ben Lui rose,
  Ben Chastle and Ben Dorain,
O'er glens and cleughs the red deer knows,
  Joys to the world foreign.

Nor far apart, but more to north,
  At foot of dark Loch Awe,
Ben Cruachan stood boldly forth,
  His double peak in snow.

Along the back of green Lismore
  And Appin hills beyond,
Ben Nevis stood in grandeur hoar,
  The king of all around.

But west, across a narrow strait,
  The hills of Mull arose,
Ben Talla fair, Ben More in state,
  And crags the eagle knows.

Such was the view on yesterday
  When light shone bright and clear,
And though the hills be dim to-day
  Such mist we may not fear.

For life to man is brief at best,
  A day that weareth cloud,
A sea that seldom is at rest,
  But plays with tempest loud.

So, use the time, the hills are near,
  The sea is but a river,
The way is smooth to-day and here,
  Now ride the tide or never!

I stepped on board the *Clansman* stout,
Sailed through the Sound of Mull,
To Salen pier, then leaping out
Made gladly for the hill.

While on the sea I just had seen,
Ere coming to the land,
Ben Talla's head with air serene
The hills around command.

In form sublime and aspect grave,
A royal air he wore,
Claimed tribute every mountain gave,
Why was he not Ben More?

He was not quite so far away,
And beautiful did seem,
While on his breast did shadows play,
And snow wreaths bloom and gleam.

But rank on rank of rugged Bens
Between me and Ben More,
Stood up in grim and dire defence,
Before the palace door.

The sea came round about his feet
From other side the isle;
With cloud and mist in dim retreat
He did his time beguile.

I started for the distant Ben
A little ere 'twas noon,
Though swift the walk by mount and glen,
The day would soon be done.

Across the dell of wood and moor
I came to Loch-na-keal,
And after miles along its shore
Betook me to the hill.

The moor was brown and bleached but dry,
The sheep lay at their ease
In greener spots, while scampered by
A white hare in the breeze,

Its body white, its ears were dark,
It ran as plump and gay
As half-grown lamb, then stopped to hark
If evil came its way.

It stood on hind legs straight and still,
Like to a speckled stone
Amid a thousand on the hill,
That round about were strewn.

Before I came to Ben More foot
I thought a stream was nigh,
It was not seen, I looked about,
The vale was still and dry.

A wonder this I had not seen
In path from hill to hill,
Where waters run the vale between,
Drawn down from spring and rill.

Across the withered bent I sped
To centre of the hollow,
When all at once in chasm dread
I heard the waters bellow.

Deep down a hundred feet they roared,
In gap of whinstone torn,
In pools they gleamed, o'er rocks they poured
In night that knew not morn.

One could have leaped across the gulf,
So narrow was the space
That was between each frowning cliff,
Above the waters' race.

'Tis there the eagle builds her nest,
The heron finds her home,
The rowan tree adorns their rest,
Above the din and foam.

I went some distance up the verge
Of rock that hemmed the wave,
And came upon a broken ledge,
That narrow passage gave.

I drank the waters pure and cold,
From snows of high Ben More ;
A joy could not be bought with gold,
Yet won by labour sore.

Then up the other bank I came
On Ben More's skirt of bent,
And sloping to the south did frame
A gradual ascent.

The whinstone rock lay on his breast,
To gravel turned and dust ;
A warrior in mail at rest,
The iron turned to rust.

Upon his neck were boulders gray,
The mist went scudding past,
The white hares ran in startled play
Athwart the naked waste.

Across the glen the ravens flew
With solitary croak,
And o'er the lambs their shadows threw,
Where browsed the spreading flock.

Be-north the ridge the snow wreaths deep
Lay still, nor feared the sun ;
In silver cold they flecked the steep
That hid the ptarmigan.

Upon the cairn I set upright
The pole had fallen been ;
And crowds of mountains met the sight
With nameless vales between.

With vapour thick the west wind blew,
The clouds came rolling on,
'Twas time to bid Ben More adieu,
And trace my pathway down.

I kissed the snow upon his brow,
And drank the water clear
Of springs that in their greenness flow,
Nor biting winds may fear.

The mount and moor were left behind,
I came unto the shore,
The rain fell dropping from the wind
As westward daylight wore.

The gravel road was paced again.
By shore of Loch-na-keal,
The shadows mingling with the rain
As night came o'er each hill.

The eagle soared through welkin gray
In wide far circling swing
As if he sought for parting day
To light his upward wing.

But all in vain, no brightness shone,
The shadows thicker fell;
The night had come, and day was done
In heaven as the dell.

From silent heights with curving sweep
He flew into a cloud,
Straight for his eyry on the steep
Where shades of terror crowd.

I sped along to Salen Inn,
And rested for the night,
That blew and rained with angry din
Till morning came in sight.

The storm withdrew, and left behind
New snow upon the hill,
The song of birds upon the wind,
And carols of the rill.

At Salen pier I found a boat
Was bound for Oban bay,
And called or passed by many a spot
Of beauty on the way.

But hills of Mull and Morven braes
  Are sights may not endure,
Like gleams of light that shadows chase
  Across the purple moor;

But yet in memory's sky the sun
  Shines high o'er Gibeon,
And e'en the pale and fickle moon
  Glows warm and true in Ajalon.

So whereso'er I journey now,
  I carry with me still
A day in Mull upon the snow
  That crowns her highest hill.

THE BLACK CRAIG OF DEE.

BLACK Craig, O Black Craig!
  Thou Black Craig of Dee!
O what is the secret
  That draweth me to thee?

I see the broom, the yellow broom,
  All in its golden prime,
The hyacinth with azure bloom
  The braes of woodland climb;
But still I look across the vale,
Thy visage dark and grim to hail!

Black Craig, O Black Craig!
Thou Black Craig of Dee!
O what is the secret
That draweth me to thee?

When dew is on the Molloch's breast
The lark will up and sing,
And raptures as of spirit blest
At gates of morning ring;
But though mine ear drinks in the strain,
The eye will turn to thee again.

Black Craig, O Black Craig!
Thou Black Craig of Dee!
O what is the secret
That draweth me to thee?

As day goes round from east to west,
And shimmers on Loch Ken,
Or strikes upon the Lowran's crest,
Or basks in Garroch glen,
Still in the centre of the scene
Thy darkness overtops the green,

Black Craig, O Black Craig!
Thou Black Craig of Dee!
O what is the secret
That draweth me to thee?

When Ken with lingering pace and slow
Looks back on Ballangear,
And at Glenlee will cease to flow,
Bewildered with good cheer.

Yet o'er its wave mine eye will rise,
And hail thy darkness in the skies!

Black Craig, O Black Craig!
Thou Black Craig of Dee!
O what is the secret
That draweth me to thee?

Methinks I know thy face austere,
Each day it turns on me,
And on thy brow are traced with care
The lines of destiny:
The hill of death confronts life's noon,
Be-darkens sweetest vale in June!

Black Craig, O Black Craig!
Thou Black Craig of Dee!
O what is the secret
That draweth me to thee?

Yet doth thy darkness give me light
Surpassing sun or star,
And bids me mark the certain flight
Of life from earth afar,
Till sweetest dell the eye hath known,
Or foot hath trod is past and gone!

Black Craig, O Black Craig!
Thou Black Craig of Dee!
A dread is in the secret
That draweth me to thee!

Why should I fear thy shadow grim
  Withstanding day at noon,
Though it the loveliest vale bedim,
  That wears the smile of June?
Above thy head the sun is high,
And Christ is reigning in the sky!

Black Craig, O Black Craig!
  Thou Black Craig of Dee!
May bliss be in thy secret,
  The life that is to be!

A MISTY MORN.

A THOUSAND altars smoke upon the hills,
  And raise sweet incense to the morning sun;
The wreathing mist the fell and valley fills,
  And heaven and earth are mingled into one.

Gray, blue, and brown, they hover o'er the moor,
  While dense and thick they steam up through
    the glen;
Of fickle form that no time will endure,
  They pass from wood and crag beyond our ken.

Some lift their arms into the rising day,
  And breathe into the sky a silent tale;
They catch the smile of heaven and pass away,
  By joy translated from the weeping vale.

The steaming smoke broods over placid Ken,
Speeds up Glenlee and makes the greenwood gray,
Where trees stand up like ghosts of ancient men,
That pale with fear at sight of breaking day.

In vagrant mood in hollow and on height,
Slow rising broods the mist, a lonely smoke
Above a fire unseen to mortal sight,
That smoulders warm on moss and barren rock.

The morning shines on waist of broad Millyea,
As glows a belt of gold on queenly zone,
The mists arise and feel the breath of day,
Where radiance burns upon Loch Dungeon lone.

The vale is clear, the braes fair morning greet,
While in the glens the streamlets catch the light,
But clouds and mist brood o'er the mountain's seat,
That nearest heaven feels the breath of night.

Thus God hath set the dark against the bright,
In turn to visit all with eve and dawn :
Now shines the vale that wept in mist and night,
While lowers the mount that late with morning shone.

So take the light as gift of God's own hand
When dew is pearl 'neath the eye of day,
And own the gloom is here at His command
When mist and cloud obscure the traveller's way.

A WALK TO MILLYEA.

AWAKE, my heart, this April morn,
And cross the river Ken,
Fast speeds the life of him that's born,
And cometh not again!

I took my staff, went down Dalry,
And passed the churchyard brae,
That sleeps to Ken's soft murmurous sigh,
Alike by night and day.

The banks grew green beside the stream,
I followed with the wave,
And saw the waters in the gleam
That morning's gladness gave.

The steps are covered with the flow
Of waters deep and strong;
Now wade the stream! for thou must go
Across that steadfast throng.

Across the Ken, then o'er the Coom
To old Glenlee I stray,
Where ancient trees for night make room,
Within the reign of day.

The sunshine plays npon the green,
Though shadows haunt the trees,
And much to please may there be seen
And heard within the breeze.

Then through the woods to Ballangear,
That sits upon the height,
I see the lawns and gardens fair,
That bloom in morning light.

Fair, fair the view from Ballangear,
That marks the kindling dawn
Rise o'er the moors of Lochinvar,
To bid the night begone.

Though fair the scene, I may not stay,
But rise into the moor,
Where new-born lambs this April day
Drink in the sunny hour.

Knocksheen and Largmore with Drumboy,
In Garroch Glen at rest,
The gladsome light and breeze enjoy,
Like bird its downy nest.

The voice of Spring talks in the glen,
And whispers to the flowers,
The cuckoo's note beguileth men
With dreams of Summer bowers.

O'er moss and moor my pathway lies
Among the straying flocks,
To broad Millyea, that blocks the skies
With shield of ancient rocks.

There far and wide the moor-burn flame
Burns keen against the wind,
A power misfortune cannot tame,
Nor anger's fury bind.

The hero's heart is like the fire
  That burns against the wind,
Which onward ever will aspire,
  And throw the smoke behind.

A happy soul I ween is he
  Whose spirit forward goes,
That yields not to adversity,
  Nor any wind that blows.

The sun advanceth in the sky,
  The pilgrim climbs at will,
O'er rocks and wreaths of snow that lie
  Sequestered on the hill.

Upon the summit broad he stands,
  Looks far and near around,
On loch and mount and Solway sands,
  A vision void of sound.

In fashion like unto a heart
  Sleeps deep and dark Loch Dee,
While from its bosom loath to part
  Its waters seek the sea.

Be-shadowed by the mountains wild,
  Yet lit with heavenly beams,
It sleepeth there, a lonely child,
  Lulled by the hum of streams.

Nor yet alone unto the eye
  That scans the desert vast,
For other lochs flash back to sky
  The silver day hath cast.

The springs of Fleet and eke Loch Grannoch
Now bask in silent noon,
While to the west lies dark Loch Enoch
At foot of Merrick's throne.

Be-north Millyea Loch Dungeon deep,
The Mid Loch and Loch Harrow,
In triple union sleep a sleep
No weary man can marrow.

And yet what tribes of creatures gay,
Within their bosom dark,
Enjoy the night as man the day,
And heaven the soaring lark!

But brief is life and dimly vain,
A feeble dream forlorn,
New-born of sleep, to be o'erlain
And dead before the morn!

E'en such is life where'er it be,
Around, beneath, on high,
In desert wide and boundless sea
It hasteth but to die!

The very earth whereon we stand,
This mountain firm shall fall,
The rolling sea and steadfast land
Depart beyond recall.

Then pilgrim! view the vision fair!
Imprint it on thy heart!
For what is seen will melt in air,
From being quite depart.

Look high and deep! both wide and far!
If sight can hunger feed,
From earth unto the utmost star
That blooms in heaven's mead!

No star is seen within the day,
And time is coming soon,
When worlds will fade as lilies gay
That deck the fields of June.

What! though in thought thou should'st pursue
Thy course from sphere to sphere,
Unnumbered as the drops of dew
That night and morning rear!

No more could'st thou o'ertake thy rest,
Thy hunger all outrun,
Than child that seeks the glowing west
And cries to stop the Sun!

But still the vision fair would fly
The swiftest step beyond,
Till broken hope at last would die
In an abyss profound!

A needless chase, as it is vain,
Look thou around Millyea!
And all the bliss that sight can gain
Is thine this April day!

THE GOLDEN WELLS OF CAIRNSMORE.

It was upon an August day
I posted up the Ken,
When balmy fragrance filled the air,
Inspiring toiling men.

Above Dalshangan in the wood,
So gay in setting green,
As went the gig o'er moorland rude,
High Cairnsmore crowned the scene.

He threw his cloak of mist away,
The sky above was blue,
The sun shone o'er his temples gray
As toward noon it grew.

A maiden gave a foaming glass
Of nectar from the cow,
Was gathered from the dewy grass,
Where sweetest flowerets blow.

I drank it off with sweet good will,
Was ready for the mountain ;
See now, says she, you drink your fill
Where flows the golden fountain.

For high on Cairnsmore's spacious breast
Are wells of great renown,
Yea golden wells, where men may rest,
And drink their sorrows down !

Her dark eyes sparkled as she spoke
  Like diamonds in the gloaming,
And o'er my darkness radiance broke,
  Like morn o'er mountains roaming.

Why should I stay upon the plain?
  For life and time will speed,
This day will never come again
  To shine on mount and mead!

We sought the hill, a youth with me
  Of brave and steady spirit,
Went up those golden wells to see,
  And prove their priceless merit.

We left the road past Lagg Wynd stead,
  'Tween Knockgray and the stream
That down from Knockingorrach sped,
  And sang in silver gleam.

Be-west the range that upward went
  To rest on Cairnsmore's crown,
We held our way o'er rocks and bent,
  Where streams ran ever down.

One ran in secret all unseen,
  A murmur soft was heard;
Up through the earth and garb of green
  From darkness sang this bard.

It doubtless once had seen the sun,
  Sprang up 'mid verdure green,
Though now in gloom its waters run,
  And sing of what has been.

Nay more, the song doth dream of time
  Unborn, yet sure to come,
And hasteth to a happier clime,
  In sunshine free to roam.

We meet the waters coming down,
  Our footsteps ever rise
O'er bent and rock and heather brown,
  On pathway to the skies.

With blae-berries we dyed our lips,
  Their sweetness often proved,
As bee the tempting blossom sips,
  And o'er the mountain roved.

We reached the crown of Cairnsmore gray,
  Gazed far and near around,
And as the hunter looks for prey
  The eye coursed o'er the ground.

A kind of dim and ghostly mist
  O'er hill and hollow hung,
The day was still, and one might list
  The softest note ere sung.

Unto the east lay Lochinvar,
  To southward slept Loch Ken
Beneath the Lowran's shadow fair,
  A sight for eyes of men.

Cairnsmore of Dee and eke of fleet
  Were there, and broad Millyea,
And many a nameless mountain seat,
  With Merrick yont Loch Dee.

Within a dark and narrow bed
Loch Doon in slumber lay,
And shimmered where the sunshine spread
The gleam of passing day.

Far to the west, both dusk and large
Rose Ailsa Craig alone,
O'er waves that floated many a barge
To regions all unknown.

Vast mountain shapes their shadows threw
Into the misty light
Of brooding vales, where lingered dew
From morning unto night.

Now here and there a lonely spot
Was seen in narrow glen,
A tree, a mead, a shepherd's cot
Nigh hid from mortal ken.

There springs the well, green grows the grass,
The cattle pasture seek,
The shepherd lives, the moments pass,
And life runs out its week.

Adown Cairnsmore we took our way
Upon the southern side,
Between Ben-inner and Knockgray
Where streams 'mid rushes glide.

We reached Carsphairn 'mid afternoon,
But owned the search was vain,
In west or east, or late or soon,
The golden wells to gain!

Strong springs we found, and drank our fill
Where grass was golden green ;
We deemed them gold, they pleased our will,
But gold they had not been !

Such joys we found as up we went,
Then southward going down
Faint springs were seen, their waters spent,
And virtue almost gone.

Too far we were on either side,
Fair fortune was between,
We roamed the mountain high and wide,
The golden wells unseen.

Such pilgrims are the sons of men,
Hope's phantom hill who climb,
And scour it o'er and o'er again,
To lose their strength with time !

But when we reached the plain again
We found the golden wells,
For which we searched the mount in vain,
Its dimples and its dells.

In human hearts we found the wells
Not even Cairnsmore knows,
And music as of silver bells
From lips whence kindness flows !

IN MEMORY OF MARY MACKAY.

O BRIEF is the blush of the roses in June!
And vanish youth's vigour and mirth,
While the sun that shone forth in the glory of noon,
Goes down 'neath the shadow of earth!

And the maid that I saw but yesterday
Was a rose in a bush of bloom,
A stranger hand has plucked away
From its bower of sweet perfume!

Let me gather flowers and wreathe them with green,
The green of the ivy leaf,
To deck the grave of a maiden queen,
And cover the wound of grief!

O she was young and fair to view!
Her cheeks would match the rose,
Her eyes were violets in dew
That summer sunshine knows!

Her smile was like the morning beam,
That gladdens where it shines,
On mountain, moor, and rippling stream,
And the sombre wood of pines.

Her voice was like the murmur sweet
Of waves 'mong pebbles round,
While like the roe her step was fleet,
And lightly touched the ground.

As oft as came the Sabbath day
To Zion she did wend,
To worship God, and humbly pray
For help from Christ her friend.

Where was her pew was Mary seen,
Her face gave answer clear,
That as the sheep seeks pasture green
She sought God's word to hear.

Once fed herself, the lambs she fed,
And wiled them up the hill,
By voice and fair example led
To good away from ill.

But as she clambered up the steep
Down came a darksome cloud,
And from its sheath the fire did leap
With hurtling thunder loud.

Borne up through trouble fierce and strong
In chariot of fire,
She joined the glad and heavenly throng
Whose hearts to God aspire.

No more we see her on the plain,
Or in the greenwood dell,
By day or night the search is vain,
In glen or lonely fell.

We may not find her on the heath,
Nor brae where wild thyme blows,
Nor on the dreary hill of death,
Where sleep eternal snows.

Her steps are there, they may be seen,
We follow them with sorrow,
And feel the bitter blasts and keen
That life from death doth borrow.

'Tis but her mantle, and no more,
That nestles in the snow ;
Her soul has reached another shore,
Where summer breezes blow.

As plumage that a bird has shed
Upon the wintry moor,
While she to summer fields has fled,
The stormy seas out o'er,

So Mary has bequeathed to earth
The remnant of her clay,
While she herself has reach the hearth
Of summer and of day.

Then let us follow up the height,
Nor seek in scenes below
For her who dwells beyond the light
That sun or star can show !

Yet, while her form asleep doth lie
Where Ken halts in her race,
Green be the grass and blue the sky
That guard her resting-place !

THE ASCENT OF CAIRNSMORE BY THREE OLD MEN IN MARCH, 1890.

It was in March, as I have heard,
When the wind was high and stern,
And roared between Ben-inner's head
And Cairnsmore of Carsphairn,

That three old men with staff in hand
Went up the mountain's side,
And on the summit proudly scanned
The storm and misty tide.

And who are these that thus invade
The mountain in his wrath,
Whom cloud and tempest have not swayed
To take a humbler path?

One of the three is Milligan,
For years by-gone a stranger,
Who 'neath Ben-inner grew a man,
A sturdy mountain ranger.

Three years beyond the alloted span
He faces this March weather,
Yet light his step where once he ran
A boy among the heather!

Another name that Ken well knows
Doth with his brothers marrow,
Whose locks are white as driven snows
On the mountains of Cornharrow.

'Tis Seaton of that ilk I trow,
His age is seventy four ;
He climbs the mountain's rugged brow
As days and years before.

And who is he that leads the band,
His heart devoid of fears,
As stout as any in the land
That carry fourscore years?

'Tis Furmiston, a man of mark
Between the Deugh and Ken ;
Far has he walked in light and dark,
This doughtiest of men !

When he was young, and morning shone
Upon his manly brow,
His step was fleet, and with him none
Could o'er the moorlands go.

Now fourscore years are on his head,
And yet his eye is bright,
While the blessings of the poor are shed
Where the almond blossoms white.

A friend of all his kind is he,
A standard-bearer true,
Who for the right and liberty
Is Presbyterian blue.

Long may he step upon the green,
His spreading flocks to view,
And be the man that he has been
For wit and kindness true !

And when the yearly spring comes round,
  And the cuckoo haunts the hill,
While the primrose decks the shady ground
  That guards the mountain rill,

May these three heroes meet again,
  And visit Cairnsmore gray,
And may the sun on Deugh and Ken
  Make that a glorious day!

When they have climbed the hill of time,
  And can no farther go
Upon the bent and hoary rime,
  And age's alpine snow,

Like Moses from Mount Nebo's peak,
  And Aaron from Mount Hor,
May they in God their treasure seek,
  And find life evermore!

A PREHISTORIC GRAVESTONE.

UPRIGHT and clad with lichens gold and gray,
And pointed top that looks to heaven alway,
A nameless stone would therewith still proclaim
That 'neath its foot doth sleep a dead man's fame.

As far as one may sling a pebble west,
From where Kildonan * rears his ancient crest,
There stands the stone above the surging wave,
And marks a spot held sacred to the grave.

* Kildonan Castle.

Upon a terrace that o'erlooks the sea,
Beside the path where western winds blow free,
In front of Pladda and of Ailsa steep,
It guards the bed of death and slumber deep.

Dost thou keep guard upon a soldier's grave,
A leader of the people just and brave,
Or pirate landed there to yield his life
Amid the clash of swords and foemen's strife?

In vain we question thee of what is past,
The net into a barren sea is cast
Would snatch thy tale from the devouring flood,
Thy tender memory from oblivion rude!

Now nameless dust is all that doth remain
Of life's renown, its pleasure and its pain;
The pomp of power, the fame of genius high
Have passed from earth like sunlit clouds from sky!

Alas! for fame that e'er would build on earth!
All mortals they to whom the world gives birth!
And if her children die, their shadows must
Renounce the form of fame and hide in dust!

Gray stone and still! thou liftest up thy head
All speechless now, naught saying of the dead,
Though time there was, tradition helping thee,
When thy lips spoke like yonder mighty sea!

They spoke to widow and to orphans dear,
And from the stony face brought sorrow's tear,
Or sowed within the heart of heroes young
The seed of deeds that after poets sung.

Now, all the memories of that ancient time
Have vanished quite, like to the morning rime,
That melts away beneath the rising sun,
And loses being when the day's begun.

Like topmast of a ship gone down below,
That keeps above the waves and meets the blow
Of tempest fierce, so Ailsa marks the spot
Where sank a world by sun and moon forgot.

Such like this stone, the shadow of a name,
Bespeaks the death of man and eke his fame,
As Ailsa Craig above the rolling sea
Doth speak of realms that have ceased to be!

'Tis idle toil to write thy name on land;
Earth's marbles moulder into rolling sand.
An empty dream is human fame on earth,
The cry of life that's stifled at the birth.

The life departs, the voice it swoons away,
And night blots out the features of the day;
But he who does the will of God abides,
His name on rock above time's wasting tides.

A MOTHER TO HER SON.

O FRANCIS JOHN,
He is my own,
And a lovely babe is he!
I would not have the world wide
For the joy he is to me!

This Francis John
I would enthrone
Above all things I see!
My husband dear would jealous burn
Did he grudge my love to thee!

But the more I love
My son my dove,
More dear his father is!
O may this cord bind fast and long
Our sheaf of mutual bliss!

A child of grace,
Who sees God's face,
A man with honours laden,
And full of years, may he return
To the everlasting Eden!

THE CUCKOO.

'TWAS in the month of May,
Just at the break of day,
Early, early,
I heard the cuckoo say,
The fields grow green and gay,
Summer fairly!

Cuckoo! cuckoo! cuckoo!
The notes flew o'er the dew
From woodland height;

The gowan ope'd its eye
Unto the morning sky,
A gem of light.

In bed I dreaming lay,
Till, through the silence gray
Of morn, there broke
A strangely pleasant strain,
That banished fancies vain,
While hope awoke.

What voice is this I hear?
That startles night and fear,
Sends dreams aghast!
And through the shadows gray
Foretells the coming day,
All nightmare past!

'Tis but another dream,
An evanescent gleam
On darkness thrown,
The promise of a day
That come is straight away,
Forever gone!

Away! thou gloomy thought!
With evil thou art fraught,
A foe to good;
What soul could now refrain
From drinking in that strain
In yon pine wood!

Thy form of bluish gray
Is clad in dim array,
And seldom seen;
Uncertain hope it is,
The phantom of a bliss
That has not been.

And will it ever be?
The past will answer thee,
Its voice regard!
List thou to echo's tongue,
Has never said nor sung
But what it heard!

For still doth summer come
Where'er that voice doth roam
O'er hill and stream,
A train of radiant days,
June basking on the braes,
A glorious dream!

On banks of lake Baikal,
Where toils the convict thrall
In dreary Kara,
And where in deserts wide
The exile must abide,
And drink of Marah;

When first the cuckoo cries,
And stricken winter flies
With tempests rude,

Enchanted with the strain
  The exile breaks his chain,
And seeks the wood.

Through Russian Tartary
Some thirty thousand flee
  Their bondage hard,
As soon as they may hear
The lay entrancing clear
  Of summer's bard!

Sweet bird! I hear thy voice;
Thou can'st not but rejoice
  When God bids thee!
Of summer thou dost sing,
I see it on the wing,
  And hear its glee!

Now tarry in the wood
Where shadows ever brood,
  And sing a song!
Haunt thou each hill and dell,
Awhile with mortals dwell
  Whose winter's long!

Nay, warble of the time
When death's cold icy rime
  Shall melt away;
When life with spring will meet,
Nor fear the passage fleet
  Of sinking day!

When those in prison dark
A voice divine will hark,
From sleep awake,
And far afield go forth,
To regions south and north
Of God's day-break.

O happy they for whom
That voice foretells no gloom,
But sunny skies,
And summer leisure long,
The woods and hills among
Of paradise!

THE BRIER ROSE.

A SWEET brier rose
In the window blows,
And blooms in the western wind;
A fragrance rare
It spreads through the air,
A joy to mortals blind.

Fair flowers abound,
Before, around,
In the glad summer light;
The day is long,
But the thrush's song
Makes the giddy hours take flight.

On the garden walk,
Where I musing stalk,
  The sea pink waits on day,
As bride in bloom
Attends the groom
  In beauteous array.

The fleur de lis,
Most fair to see,
  Is a bush of starry snow,
That through the night
Hath a silver light
  Makes the breast of darkness glow!

The rose is there,
Proud England's care;
  And the lily tells the story
Of France's dream,
A rushing stream
  Of sudden, fleeting glory!

But more than these,
In this western breeze
  There grows a bush of heather,
Of virtue rare,
Without compare,
  'Tis Scotland's garland ever!

At the rose's feet
It nestles sweet,
  But far from its native home!

It is not here
In a garden sphere,
  But where the red deer roam!

The brier rose
Most fragrant blows
  Between two stranger flowers;
It is at home,
And may not roam
  In search of happier hours!

Here is a plant
For Nile doth pant,
  Inside the window's eye;
Its lily bloom
Must deck this room,
  Afar from Egypt's sky!

Between this flower,
Whose graceful bower
  Must here in shadow blossom,
And the heather bush
Must learn to blush
  In the garden's lowly bosom,

The brier grows,
A lovely rose!
  With bloom and fragrance laden;
She is at home,
And may not roam
  From this her native Eden!

TWO BIRDS IN FLIGHT.

WHILE walking on Kildonan sand
Before the rolling sea,
That breaks on Arran's rugged strand
With dread and majesty,

Two birds I mark ; with equal flight
They speed across the sky,
Nor turn to either left or right,
But onward swift they fly.

With eager haste they cut the air,
Their wings untiring ply,
Both sea and land beneath their care,
They hold their flight on high.

Seek ye a home in some lone vale
Where sleeps a narrow lake
Among the reeds, nor fears the gale
Where ocean's tumults break.

Fierce blows the gale that drives the sea
Upon Kildonan shore ;
Through riven clouds ye anxious flee
From nature's wild uproar !

Not many leagues have ye to make
From storm to longed-for rest,
Though at your speed ye might o'ertake
Yon sun that fires the west !

His angry flame breaks through the cloud
That would eclipse his ray,
And with untimeous night beshroud
The ruler of the day.

Yet on he goes, clouds follow fast,
He sinks behind the hills,
And, plunging in the sea at last,
The depth with glory fills!

From fear of that which dogs his train,
Or hope of bliss before,
He drives with speed his golden wain
Through heaven evermore!

But life with you is something brief,
A gourd beneath the sun,
That grows with joy and dies of grief,
Its being scarce begun!

'Tis thus ye speed with ardour fleet,
To catch a passing bliss,
In some lone vale your nest to greet,
Where reeds the lochan kiss!

High over Arran's mountains fly!
O'er cloud and storm prevail!
Until your blissful nest ye spy
Deep in Iòrsa's vale!

Ye fly together, happy pair!
Your wings keep even pace,
The storm to bear, and sun to share,
In life's consuming race!

This is your joy, yet joy alas!
That swallows up your day:
While grief detains the hours that pass,
From joy they haste away!

Speed on your flight! enjoy the time
O'er hill and valley low!
Heart sorrow ne'er invades the clime
Where your bright pinions go!

A DAY ON KNOCKGRAY.

A LETTER TO R. L.

SINCE first that you and I have met
Full many years have fled,
That now in truth we quite forget,
Like men the nameless dead.

But had you been upon Knockgray,
One of a company,
Where youth and wisdom, grave and gay,
Made rare felicity,

You would have boasted of a day
Had dwelt in memory long,
As light doth with the mountain stay
When shades the valley throng.

We sat us down among the trees
That grow around Lagwynd,
We saw the sun, and felt the breeze,
And feasted to our mind.

The wood nymphs spread the feast with care,
All precious things they brought
Of sea and land, a tribute rare,
With strength and sweetness fraught.

We drank of milk and foaming cream,
We ate the berries sweet,
With salmon red from flowing stream,
And all that taste could treat.

The reaper coursed around the field,
The grass and clover fell,
The winning hay did fragrance yield,
That every breeze did tell.

The Deugh ran on with murmurous song,
'Tween hills and through the holm,
And fain its course it would prolong,
Among the flocks to roam.

The trout lay panting in the linn,
The curlew thrilled the sky
With rapture and a gladsome din,
Till echo answered, Aye.

For heaven and earth their bridal hour
Renewed that summer day,
As in a honeysucklebower
Love pleaded time to stay!

But time alas ! with envy's edge
Sped faster in his wrath,
As wild rose blossoms from the hedge
Fell withered on his path.

So then in haste we clomb the hill,
And used the fleeting hour,
Where far and wide the eye at will
Surveyed earth's summer dower.

The streaming heat on mountain peak,
That seemed to show the air,
The pillar of the lonely reek,
The desert's simple prayer ;

The fleecy clouds like dreams of bliss
Within sleep's cradle soft,
The sun had caught and with a kiss
Had borne them high aloft ;

The silver gleam of dripping rocks
Abasking in the light,
The sporting lambs and spreading flocks
Beguiled our roving sight.

We saw a glimpse of dark Loch Doon,
Beyond it Ayrshire lay,
A dream of song, a muffled tune
Of stream flows far away !

Unseen there lay the land of Burns,
As 'neath the smoke the fire,
Above the sea's wild tidal turns
Rose mountains of Kintyre.

But what we saw, or what we heard,
There is no tongue that tells ;
Vain is the labour of the bard
To find where echo dwells !

When she has spoken out her tale
Of things both strange and true,
No man with her can e'er prevail
To tell it out anew.

One answer to the things that hap
She soundeth in the ear,
A whisper soft, a thunder clap
She doth to memory bear.

And then she is forever dumb
Within her hollow hill,
Where foot of hunter ne'er may come,
Though daring be his skill !

The thing that she hath spoken clear,
Upon the heels of fate,
She speaks but once for human ear,
Nor old things will relate.

'Tis little of her speech we seize,
The parting syllable,
The rest is lost upon the breeze,
And sinks within the hill.

Then wonder not if I have said
But little of Knockgray ;
An echo's breath is quickly sped,
As the foam-bell breaks in spray.

But though that day was bright and sweet,
When heaven harped on earth,
Some other day we two may meet,
And share a greater mirth!

For o'er Knockgray doth Cairnsmore stand,
That boasts a golden well;
When you and I that spring command
Its own tale bliss will tell!

A TRIP TO NORWAY.

'TWAS in the month of August fair,
And on the sixteenth day
Of Eighteen-Ninety, forth did steer
A ship to Norroway.

From Leith she sailed in gallant mood,
By Captain Angus led,
A mariner as brave and good
As ever deck hath bred.

With crew and stewards forty men,
A goodly company,
St. Sunniva went out again
To brave the Northern Sea.

The passengers a hundred told,
And eke a score and seven,
Sailed out a carnival to hold
With sea and earth and heaven.

The shore of Fife we passed along,
  King James's golden border,
And left behind the Bass Rock strong
  And the Isle of May in order.

A gentle motion on the deep,
  The ship went gaily forth,
And hope within each heart did leap,
  Sought Summer in the North.

When talk was free upon the deck,
  And each man felt secure,
Nor thought of ill, or any wreck
  A mortal might endure.

Up from below a whisper ran,
  "Man overboard!" it says,
They rush and ask, and eager scan
  The sea's mysterious face.

They launch the small boat in a trice,
  Stout sailors bend the oar,
They seek to break the sea's disguise,
  And watery wastes explore.

St. Sunniva backs on her path
  Out from St. Andrews bay,
But what she seeks the ocean hath,
  And holds afar from day!

The search is vain, as oft hath been,
  For those who seek the dead,
Of whom hope dreams they may be seen
  Alive where light is shed.

Her northern course she starts anew,
Across the mouth of Tay,
Upon a track of waters blue,
Till fall the shadows gray,

Where grim Dunnotar's tower is seen
Upon a headland bold.
Be-south the bay of Aberdeen,
Of old a gruesome hold.

Within the bay she halts a space,
Gives out and takes again
New travellers, who join the race
Of pilgrims on the main.

North-east across the troubled deep
She voyages anon,
A night and day where billows keep
Grim guard on Neptune's throne,

'Till Norway's gray and wimpling shore
Salutes the gazer's eye,
And Fjords calm, where waves no more
Rise foaming to the sky.

'Tween brown and rocky heights we pass,
And specks of cultured soil,
The golden grain and tender grass
That answer human toil.

The town of Haugesund we view,
And fair-haired Harold's tomb,
Who erst did petty kings subdue,
And still would hold their doom.

His monument of pillared stone
Lifts high its haughty head,
While those beneath its shadow thrown
Are tombs of conquered dead.

So would the pride of man project
Beyond the grave its power,
And make the waters deep reflect
The phantoms on the shore!

At Teron in the dusk and rain
They dropped the heavy anchor,
A few hours rest, then steamed again
Through night unto Hardanger.

In morning light up to the deck
With hasty steps we ran,
To see the snow the mountains fleck,
And silver torrents scan.

And as the Fjords turned aside
And skirted lonely braes,
Amid the mountains fain to hide
From man's inquiring gaze,

We looked ahead and wondered how
The ship would find a way,
But still before the advancing prow
New lengths of water lay.

The mountain's feet are busked with pine,
The rowan red and hazel,
On peasant's cots the sun doth shine,
And the birch tree's waving tassel.

While higher up on frowning rocks,
And dimples green, where gather
The climbing goats and wooly flocks
That nip the tufts of heather,

The rainbow rests its lovely form,
Across the mountain's bosom,
And wreathes Hardanger with a charm
Entrancing, sweet and lo'esome!

The glacier of Folgefond
High o'er the mist appears;
Its shining frost gleams far around,
All hoar with countless years.

His arms stretch down the passes deep,
Where ice-born waters flow,
That winter state above may keep,
Though summer bask below.

At Oddé stepped we on the shore,
Up through the glen to roam,
Where Lotefos in spray doth pour,
And thunder in the foam.

Right o'er the mountain's summit high
Two rushing rivers leap,
And meet while falling from the sky
Midway the rugged steep.

We pass beneath this wild affray,
And gather sprigs of heather,
And blue bells blooming in the spray
Of waves that break forever.

Across the dell the Splendefos
In one broad current streams,
Right o'er the rocks with boundless force,
Where spray in silver gleams.

Adown the glen the wheel we turn,
The waters at our side,
Now still and deep, then foam and chide
Where fate is hard to bide.

Across the loch anon we steam,
And seek the Buarbrae,
A glacier whence forth doth stream
A river into day.

We climb a rough and tortuous path,
That's oft eclipsed with wood,
Beside a river in its wrath,
Speeds past with murmurs rude.

But step by step the travellers' feet
Each longsome mile o'ertake,
And reach the glacier's lofty seat,
Whence streams from winter break.

Beneath the arch of green and blue
We stand with wondering eyes,
And mark the river rushing through,
To hail the sunlit skies.

Long has it run in darkness dense,
Beneath an icy load ;
Now mad with life and joy intense,
It takes a rocky road.

And happy he who meets the dawn,
  Though rocks obstruct his way,
As playful as the skipping fawn
  Among the peaks of day.

We follow where the waters run,
  Return to Oddè's bay,
And end the day as 'twas begun,
  On board *St. Sunniva.*

At dusk she starts her race anew,
  Lifts up the lazy anchor,
And ploughs her way the waters through,
  In the Fjord of Hardanger.

Out of the Fjord in the night
  Is felt a slight commotion,
The while our ship rides on the might
  And swell of open ocean.

She turns into another lane,
  Hemmed in by craggy hills,
Whence hoary torrents bound and strain,
  And foaming water spills.

When morning light has decked the earth,
  And pearled all the fountains,
St. Sunniva rides in with mirth,
  To Bergen 'mid the mountains.

There ships at anchor lay around,
  With the fish of all creation,
The smell thereof it might astound
  The man of lowest station.

Around the outskirts of the town
We drive as if on duty ;
But pleasure doth our purpose crown
At sight of Bergen's beauty.

From Bergen thence the good ship sails
For the Fjord of the Sogne,
And from the prow the dawn she hails,
'Mid scenes severe and lone.

Great mountains rise, whose solemn mien
Is deep engraved with time,
With hieroglyphs of years have been,
The great past's hoary rime.

As on we sail the Fjord's arms
Strange mountain scenes explore,
Where solitude's primeval charms
May grace her evermore.

Few passengers are on the deck,
These wonders to behold,
By train from Bergen they inspect
Man's art in nature's hold.

The many drive through tunnels dark,
And blinks of fleeting day,
Till Mr. Lamb, their guide, cries, "Hark!
At Vossevangen stay!"

Nor vainly spoke, the words are wise,
All hasten to obey,
And joy that eve without disguise
Disports in song and play.

Norwegian beauty decks the room,
And sings the strains of Finland,
Old Scotia's lays of heath and broom,
And the merry lilts of England ;

With Sagas of the Norsemen bold,
Who sailed the seas of yore,
And dangers dared for the fleece of gold
On some far distant shore.

Yet of these scenes and songs I heard
Naught but a formless rumour,
Like dream unshapen, which the bard
May fashion to his humour.

As up the Fjord on we sail,
Amid the mountains high,
Within a shallow boat and frail
A woman we espy.

The stern was filled with bunches green
Of flowers and new mown hay,
Was cut the trees and rocks between,
At dewy morn ere day.

She rows her well-won precious spoil
Across the Fjord deep,
Well pleased that courage linked with toil
Might such a guerdon reap.

O ye who sit upon the lap
Of luxury and wealth !
Try many draughts, but fail to tap
The fountain pure of health !

While those the mountain steep who scale,
To mow the herbage green,
And o'er the Fjord row and sail,
Strike envy from a queen!

With milk is filled the mother's breast,
Her infant drinks and sleeps,
And both enjoy an honest rest
Where the bounding torrent leaps.

Yet truth it is, I must confess,
Few such exchange would make,
From ennui and idleness
Stern poortith's yoke to take!

As to the Fjord's head we drew
The mountains gathered near,
And o'er the stilly waters threw
Dark shadows and severe.

Now when the Naerodal was seen
We stepped upon the shore,
Then up the glen, gray hills between,
Beneath the cataracts hoar.

The waters, green or silver clear,
Went murmuring along
Within the Naerodal severe,
Entranced in their own song.

As on we drove in Stolkjaere slim,
At foot of mountain walls,
That fill the glen with shadows dim,
And the sound of waterfalls.

With bare head lifted o'er the dell,
All desolate and gray,
Thorsknutten stands, as if to tell
The tale of storms for aye!

Unto the summit of Stalheim,
O'erlooks the Naerodal,
An elbowing road the travellers climb,
Each side a waterfall.

The Stalheimfos with one brave bound
Descends into the glen,
The Sievelefos with thundering sound
Leaps down and down again,

From some high home among the hills,
A deep lone lake mayhaps,
That's fed by many whispering rills,
Whose waves the reindeer laps.

But now from crag to crag they toss,
Far from their former rest,
Or tranquil flow 'mid heath and moss,
By morning's breeze carest.

From cliff to cliff thay break in spray,
That rises like a cloud
O'er combatants in fierce affray
Where cannons thunder loud.

But by and bye those waters fall
Into a tranquil motion,
When once they reach the Naerodal,
That guides them to the ocean.

Upon the Stalheim table land
The crowding tourists rally,
See grandeur's haunts on every hand,
And dread awe in the valley.

The gray clouds gather on the sky
Then bursts the upper fountain.
The rain comes pouring from on high,
And the torrents from the mountain.

Then hurries down the speckled train
Into the Naerodal,
Each driver gives the pony rein
For speed, whate'er befall.

Thus helter skelter on they run,
And yet enjoy the chase,
As motley band as e'er the Sun
Saw in such narrow space.

From Land's End we to John o' Groat's,
From Lincoln unto Bangor;
Far gathered sheep and bearded goats
Sail forth for the Geiranger.

The speech and laughter of the South,
The manner Caledonian,
And the fun-provoking Irish mouth
Make the table Babylonian.

As queer a tribe has seldom met
Within a ship's saloon;
Such tribute Pan could never get
Beneath a Grecian moon!

St. Sunniva sails through the night,
'Mid many shielding isles,
Until on deck the broad daylight
Salutes the crew with smiles.

Some passengers of virtue rare
Pace up and down the deck,
And view the morn in radiance fair
On sea and mountain break.

The cliff of Hornelen so steep,
Three thousand feet in height,
Up from the sieging waters deep
Denies inquiring sight.

A crown of mist is on his head,
Although his breast is bare,
And hides from view the perils dread
King Olaf challenged there,

When up its rocky breast he climbed,
And saved a life in danger,
With agile valour, deed well timed
Though ventured for a stranger.

Much more when this was for a friend,
A servant faithful dear ;
Such brotherhood no chance could rend,
That dared death crowned with fear !

Into the open then we sail,
Pass Vangso isle on starboard,
With Stadtland head and many an isle,
The great sea on our larboard.

The wave is blue, the sun shines bright,
  The whales swim at the prow,
With beauty and with joy bedight,
  Right through the sea they plough.

They try *St. Sunniva* a race,
  Then dive and turn aside,
To rise and roll in open space,
  Upon the heaving tide.

Anon we pass the isles amid,
  Strike east and voyage south,
In fjords by the mountains hid,
  And veiled with shades uncouth.

'Twas thus with growing awe we drew
  Into Geiranger Strait,
Where heaven and earth their image threw
  On hell's still ebon gate.

The glassy waters semblance gave
  Of land and distant sky,
The mountains lay beneath the wave,
  Far down their summits high.

The hazel and the rowan red,
  The fir tree darkly green,
And the peasant's home on the cliff's high head,
  A terror to be seen.

'Tis said that there the children play
  Tied to a post or tree,
Lest they should hurtle down the brae
  Into the gloomy sea.

The mountains high and far beyond
Are veiled with ages gray,
And rest in mystery profound
Beneath the eye of day !

They shine with fields of silver snow
Within their wrinkles deep,
And from the glaciers rivers flow,
And bound o'er cliff and steep.

In glory from the mountain's brow
The seven sisters run,
And though in haste they foaming flow,
Their race is never done.

From Merok thence the ship turned round,
Sailed back through the Geiranger,
Until at dusk she sought the ground,
While dived the heavy anchor.

There close at hand in shadow lay
The dusky isle called Lepso,
More safe to Mouat, though less gay
Than the island of Calypso.

When great Ulysses homeward bound,
With the scars of many a sabre,
Was wrecked in storm and came aground,
Alive with grief and labour,

Calypso gave him welcome bland,
And seven years of rest,
Her isle and all at his command,
If that could make him blest.

Good welcome Betty Mouat had
Upon the coast of Lepso,
Though dark the isle, it made her glad
As the Greek hailed by Calypso.

Into the sea her comrades thrown,
By Shetland's stormy strand,
In open boat and all alone,
Nine days she drove from land.

Nine days across the northern sea,
Her mates were hunger fell,
And fiery thirst, sad company,
As mariners can tell!

Across the sullen roaring waves
Her little boat was driven,
Like life pursued 'mid open graves,
Beneath a cloudy heaven.

But God in mercy saw her state,
And led her through the storm
Of care and fear and waves' debate,
Escaped from dread and harm.

The hours of night soon passed away
By the dusky isle of Lepso,
While the ship's saloon was bright and gay
As the palace of Calypso.

There Captain Angus, sage in sooth,
Did grace a generous table,
With freight of stories and of truth
Surpassed the tongue of fable!

Full forty years upon the wave,
  Yet ruddy, fresh serene ;
His countenance so blithe and brave,
  A thousand storms had seen !

The martial recitation bold
  That scaled the heights of Alma,
Or pensive strains of days of old
  By Ossian sung in Selma,

Devour the hours of joyous time,
  Like a dream in fairy dingle,
Or mellow notes of a pleasant chime
  That moments few may tingle.

As Samson took the double door
  Of Gaza, posts as well,
From off the gate, and proudly bore
  His burden from the dell,

Until before high Hebron's tower,
  Upon a hill there lay
The spoils of great victorious power
  No mortal could gainsay ;

Our good ship up her anchors drew,
  From midnight Gaza sailed,
Till from the deck night's shadows flew,
  And glorious day was hailed.

The air was crisp blew o'er the prow
  From mountains high and strange,
And whispered of the fields of snow
  Above the tides of change.

On right and left and far before
Those wondrous mountains stood,
As in the hoary days of yore
That shone before the flood!

Their rugged peaks all weather worn,
Strange towers and spires uprear
Into the radiance of the morn,
Like frozen ghosts of fear;

Or dreams that of the night are born,
Fantastic shapes assume,
That memory photographs at morn,
Immortal in their gloom!

Such were the mountain forms were seen
Above the Romsdal river,
As on it ran 'mong meadows green
With warble and with quiver.

From Naes to Horgheim on we drove,
A motley caravan,
A pilgrim tribe who loved to roam
'Mid hills where waters ran.

The Trolltinderne with bulwarks high
Stood there with visage hard,
Whose warlock forms outlined the sky
Like sentinels on guard.

Across the stream the Romsdalhorn
Held up its rocky spear,
Above the meadows newly shorn,
And the corn in yellow ear.

The Vengetinderne grandly rose,
Arrayed in royal pride,
With warts of rock 'tween silver snows
In the dimples of its side.

In Indian file we turned again,
Drove through the land of fable,
Whose hills are clouds, a giant train,
Or white or grimly sable.

At Naes anon we board anew
St. Sunniva the rover,
And sail adown the Fjord blue,
Where mountain shadows hover.

We reach the pleasant town called Molde,
Whose feet rest on the sea,
Whose head the heathy heights enfold,
Where summer basks in glee.

An island lies before its face,
In shape a swordfish long,
And shields it from the fierce embrace
Of ocean's stormy throng.

I vow it is a gladsome sight,
With mountains far around,
To walk upon that sunny height
And on the sea look down.

St. Sunniva at close of day
Her anchors weighed and sailed,
Far north 'mid scattered islets gray,
Till Throndhjem she hailed.

By noon next day we came upon
This town in Fjord hid.
Of ancient Norway was the the throne,
Where kings ruled from the Nid.

Within a loop of Nid it stands,
Where winding waters run,
And warble o'er the moving sands
Beneath the Moon and Sun.

This town called Nidaros of old,
Now Throndhjem by name,
Is dearer far than fleece of gold
To northmen and to fame.

We walk along the tranquil street,
Where trees their shadows throw,
Or churches aged and solemn greet,
Or pace the grave-yards low.

Where maidens fair, all in the bloom
Of summer in the meadow,
Appear with flowers to deck the tomb,
And arch with love death's shadow.

There youth and age like sorrow share,
The rich and poor they marrow,
And posies of affection bear
To deck the grave's cold barrow.

We climbed a height above the town,
Beside the castle gray,
Where a sentinel paced up and down,
O'er all kept lone survey.

We looked upon the dimpled green
  Enclasping Throndhjem,
The hills and fairy howes between,
  Rare setting for a gem.

Then over Norway's rugged breast,
  A wide and wild display,
We saw a mount whose distant crest
  Loomed blue in Sweden's day.

We looked afar o'er vale and fell
  With ardent gaze for Sweden,
And when the eye that mount could tell
  'Twas like a glimpse of Eden !

Right through a vale 'tween mountains high,
  Now seen and then 'twas hidden,
It was a form 'tween earth and sky,
  The veil of realms forbidden.

Through lovely fields we drove anon,
  Earth graced with beauty's armour ;
The corn and barley golden grown
  Smiled fortune on the farmer.

And then we reached a dwelling fair,
  Embowered in nature's arbour,
One would have looked for pleasure there,
  And bliss in such a harbour.

Alas that man too seldom knows
  Where joy hath life abiding,
Beguiled by vain fantastic shows
  Where grief and death are hiding.

The house is fair and eke the grounds,
But lepers are within,
Where flesh hath pains, and soul hath wounds,
And all to death is kin.

We enter, and from ward to ward
With silent step we go,
And view with reverent regard
The wasted face of woe.

Some will not meet the strangers' eye,
But with the blanket hide
The countenance, and heavy sigh,
And all intrusion chide.

With step unlingering we pass,
A glimpse enough we deem,
For little time seems long, alas,
When trouble is the theme!

Some bore their fate with tranquil air,
As if resigned to God,
Their heart above consuming care,
Their hope on heaven's road.

It is not place nor outward state,
Declares who fortune miss,
A leper's hard and gloomy fate
May prove the mask of bliss.

Yet, as we leave the lepers' home,
Our hearts to God confess
The boon of health, with power to roam,
And freedom from distress.

In stolkjaere and in carriole
We seated were anew,
And drove unto a waterfall,
A famous sight to view.

We saw a river, broad and deep,
Ride in the flush of might,
Straight o'er the rocks with thundering leap,
In spray and rainbow light.

Thus falls the Lerfos night and day,
With horrid force and din,
Beneath a shower of sparkling spray,
Broods o'er the boiling linn.

Upon a ledge of rock we stand,
And mark the foaming wave,
The rushing waters proudly grand
The mountain's terrors brave.

To Throndhjem we turn again,
Nor farther north may steer,
From thence the midnight sun is gone,
And the bloom of Norway's year.

At Nidaros some leave the ship,
With thoughts of war are laden,
As forth they go to dare the grip
And hug of bears in Sweden.

We southward sailed an afternoon,
A night and eke a day,
A voyage like a rambling tune,
And a rhapsody at play.

We sat upon the good ship's prow,
And looked across the sea,
Where the rolling whale did blow and plough,
And swim with ardent glee.

The fisher with his black square sail
Sped o'er the azure wave,
The same as caught the wintry gale
Drove on the Vikings brave.

As on we voyaged to the south,
Gray mountains bare and grim
Held up their weathered heads uncouth,
Beneath the rainbow's rim.

As if but yesterday the flood
Had left their wrinkled brow,
While at their feet the billows rude
A chain of foam did throw.

When we had sailed an afternoon,
A night and eke a day,
And heard the waters round us croon,
As they broke in silver spray,

Had talked away the sunny hours
Upon the ship's proud mane,
And on the rope had tried our powers
With many a tug and strain,

We came to Bergen town once more,
And anchored for the night,
While rain in torrents down did pour,
And wept day's vanished light.

The sun arose on Bergen bay,
In glorious youth he shone,
As on that first far distant day
That bloomed on Eden gone.

From deck we stepped on shore to greet
Things strange to foreign eyes,
To ramble up and down each street,
True fools, who would be wise.

There dresses quaint and jewels rare,
Most curiously set,
The robes of otter and of bear
We for our wives must get.

For woe betide the luckless loon
Who pays not when he may
The price of his piano's tune
For many a coming day!

The sun was hot and bright and clear
That day in Bergen bay,
And gave the eye right royal cheer
Until we sailed away.

Some friends were left upon the strand,
Who waved a long adieu,
Until the ship passed out from land,
Across the ocean blue.

Four hours beyond the noon we sailed,
Beneath a beaming sun,
And every heart with high hope hailed
The voyage just begun.

The sun went slanting to the west,
  Adown the azure steep,
Until in all his glory drest
  He plunged into the deep.

Night came with clouds, the breeze arose,
  Intent upon a fray,
While phosphor from the billows' throes
  Flashed silver in the spray.

We sit upon the deck for long,
  And mark the phosphor light
On crested waves, that crowding throng
  The sable feet of night.

At length with wary step we go
  Down brazen stairs to bed,
And in our cabin hear the flow
  Of waters overhead.

Now here were met Galwegians four,
  From Cree and Ken and Dee,
And they within one cabin door
  Lay tossing on the sea.

Forsyth a doctor skilled was there,
  A chemist sage was Keith,
And Wilson noble, tall, and fair
  Did Carlinwark bequeath.

This brother from the banks of Dee,
  And Mather from Dalry,
Agreed to sail the northern sea,
  A foreign land to spy.

When they had reached the port of Leith,
Upon the sea to roam,
They comrades found, Forsyth and Keith,
Galwegians all at home.

Thus had we sailed to Norway's shore,
And north to Nidaros,
From Skudesnaes with great galore,
By Fjord glen and fos.

Then back to Bergen, and again
Across the tidal streams,
We hear the weltering waves' refrain
Break through our spectral dreams.

St. Sunniva speeds on amain,
Though rolling in her gait,
Day breaks within the east again,
The sun rides forth in state,

The little birds have flown from far
To find another land,
Alight on deck and mast and spar,
Yea rest in man's own hand.

But when refreshed, grown wild once more,
They lift the eager wing
Across the wave, to find a shore
And land to rest and sing.

From Peterhead to Aberdeen,
And south beyond Dunnottar,
The herring fleet full sail is seen,
And steering like an otter.

Within the bay where Dee and Don
Wind up their river ditty,
And bid farewell to Caledon,
And eke her granite city,

Friends disembark for Aberdeen,
'Mong them Professor Struthers,
With stalwart Bruce, Miss Gordon, queen,
With the heart of seven mothers.

With us *St. Sunniva* sails on,
While they step on the granite,
With thankful heart they feel the stone
And firmness of the planet.

She speedeth past the Esk and Tay,
The Neuk of Fife and Largo,
The Inch of Keith and Isle of May,
At Leith to yield her cargo.

At dusk she halts upon the Forth,
At anchor there doth ride,
To end her voyage from the north
Upon the rising tide.

Up from the wide expanse of sea
The heaving waters come,
And through the darkness rolling free
To port they bear her home;

The while the passengers asleep
Reck not the fleeting hours,
Till day breaks on the leaden deep,
Through clouds like golden bowers.

They rise and dress, and break their fast
With bitter herbs and sorrow,
That those twelve days so soon are past,
Nor may return to-morrow.

The friendship of a week must bear
The strain of parting now,
And like a reed that feels the air,
It swayeth to and fro.

Upon the deck they bid adieu,
And through the streets they stray,
In groups, or lone, or two by two,
Till all have gone away.

The north and south, the east and west,
Receive the wandering race ;
And blest are they whose home is rest
Returning from the chase !

THE LAIRD OF KNOCKSHEEN.

THE laird of Knocksheen,
He stood on the green,
And he swore by the light of the moon,
That he would be gay,
With fortune would play,
And sup with her golden spoon.

For land was his,
And the price of bliss,
  And the jovial cup he knew ;
So he mounted his steed,
And rode high speed
  To join a carousing crew.

Down Garroch glen
He reached the Ken,
  And plunged into the waves ;
Across the stream,
Like a troubled dream,
  Rode past the field of graves.

With heart elate,
And thirst was great
  For dash and revelry ;
At the clachan inn,
With companions kin,
  Began a noisy spree.

With eye and hand
Could well command
  The call for another gill,
With a winning tongue
As ever sung,
  The hostess had her will.

They ate and drank
In measure rank,
  Till they began to spew :

The laird appraised,
The endeavour raised,
  Of his retainer crew.

Then on the scene,
With winning mien,
  Came wanton maidens bland ;
The landlady
Led on the glee
  With an enchanter's wand.

Fond grew Knocksheen
Of his buxom queen,
  As she promised love most true,
When they danced anon,
Where the moonlight shone,
  Under the heavens blue.

His cronies tripped,
And the damsels skipped
  Where the lightsome wind-flowers blow,
While murmured Ken
Adown the glen,
  As a thousand years ago.

And many a flower,
And many a bower,
  Had grown and faded there,
And love-sick swains
Had sung their strains
  Of rapture and despair,

Upon the knowes,
And in the howes,
And will do yet again,
Where lad and lass,
And ages pass,
Like ripples on the Ken.

The merry band,
So blithe and bland,
Would fain have danced for long,
Had held the moon
At silver noon
Her starry maids among.

But down she sped,
Beyond the head
Of cloudy, dark Millyea,
Where, on the bent
With dew be-sprent,
By lone Loch Dee she lay.

The dancers' feet
Did then retreat,
As the music left the breeze,
And the laird of Knocksheen
Left the dew on the green,
And the shadows to wait on the trees.

To the drink anew,
With a sploring crew,
He sat in the clachan inn,

While the rafters rung
With a lawless tongue,
  Till the night shook with the din.

A stirrup cup,
And his blood was up,
  He mounted and rode on ;
The night was dark,
There was naught to mark,
  Save a light on Ken that shone.

A lonely light
Made the window bright
  Of the kirk above the Ken :
It flashed on the graves,
And the river's waves,
  An eerie sight for men.

He drew the rein,
Nor could refrain
  To please a curious eye,
Leaped on the ground
With hurried bound,
  To tree his horse did tie.

With peering eye
A scene did spy
  Of revelry and din :
O horrid sight !
At dead of night
  The kirk a haunt of sin

What saw he there
Had made despair
  Spring out of hope's bright brow ;
As once of old,
Minerva bold,
  From Jupiter's did grow.

Across the kirk,
He saw the mirk
  Frown on an open door ;
While the glare within,
And the yelling din,
  Defied night's gloomy shore.

As waves that rush
With hurry and flush,
  From under-ground to light,
To break on crags,
And teethy snags,
  A tossing, sweltering sight ;

So came a troop,
With chant and whoop,
  In from the land of graves ;
A crowding train,
And a wriggling chain
  Of life that foams and raves.

Fair youth was there,
With flaxen hair,
  And snowy neck and bosom,

Whose eyes did gleam
With many a dream
  Of what would prove full ruesome.

Man in his prime
And summer time,
  With face of bronze composure,
And woman bold,
Whose features old
  Were twisted like an osier,

In from the dance,
With wanton prance,
  They huddled close and furious,
To fill the pews,
And hear the news,
  Might tickle spirits curious.

In from the gloom,
And from the tomb,
  The land of dread and sadness,
They hurry fast
To snatch repast,
  And spur the dance of madness.

As reeds thick set
In the marshes wet,
  In wind a rustling grass,
They nod and kiss,
While a breezy hiss
  Doth o'er their faces pass ;

They fill the church,
Till not a lurch
For emptiness is there,
While their eyes look up
To a sparkling cup
In the hand of a gipsy fair.

On the pulpit stair,
With a winning air,
But a wildness in her eye,
She sung a song
To the listening throng,
While Ken slow murmured by,

O fair the bud upon the bush,
The rose ere it is blown;
Then seize the joy of youth's sweet blush,
Ere the ruddy light be gone!

For the swallow's wing is fleet, is fleet,
And pleasure will not stay!
And nought on earth is sweet, so sweet,
As the smile of early day!

When clover busks the fields of June
With summer's radiant dower,
The honey bee with humming croon
Steals joy from every flower.

As free as is the sweet wild thyme
For passers by to share,
Let man and woman in their prime
Make common joys their care!

For while the bloom is on the grass,
The mower's scythe before,
The wind doth o'er the blue bells pass
That wave in July's bower.

Ah, then 'tis time to dip the horn
Of Thor in pleasure's well,
Ere heaven's high sun drink up in scorn
The waves that bubbling swell!

For summer hours speed fast away,
And autumn's clusters fall,
Spring to the dance as fleet as they,
And feast at pleasure's call!

The dew will turn to cranreugh cold,
When no more blooms the flower;
Since pleasure dies with growing old,
Enjoy her morning hour!

Thou sparkling cup! bid passion glow!
I drink my sorrows down;
Let reason's brooding shadows go,
The morrow's dread be gone!

She took the cup,
She drank it up,
And so did all in turn;
Till a flame of blue,
Of a livid hue,
On every face did burn.

Then all upsprang,
Together sang
  With wild and fierce uproar ;
Led by this queen
That laird Knocksheen
  Had feasted with before.

We drink and dance,
And follow France,
  For endeth soon life's story ;
Since death is near,
We drown the fear
  In ecstasies of glory.

The laird knew well
This song of hell,
  Had often sung it furious ;
But sober grown,
He now doth frown
  On this infernal chorus.

A lie thou art !
Though I should smart,
  Says he, for saying this ;
O Lucky Guile !
Thy coaxing smile
  Can flatter none to bliss !

Deep in my heart
I feel the dart,
  Such doings fear the day.

Throw down the cup,
Or horrors sup
  When the rapture dies away!

All glances turn,
And faces burn
  With fury as they shout—
What wretch is he
Would spoil our glee,
  And put life's dream to rout?

Pursue and take!
Let vengeance make
  Of him a beacon dire!
Who kills our joy
We will destroy
  With wrath, and fear, and fire.

He sprang for his horse
With a desperate force,
  And they yelled as he made for the tree,
He leaped on the saddle,
And shook the loose bridle,
  And galloped along the lea.

Ken listened the thud,
And thought 'twas a flood
  And the roar of Earlston linn,
While he bowed his head
For the passage dread
  Of a torrent's boiling din.

He crossed the wave,
As fury drave,
  And made the charger reel,
Up Waterside,
With spanking stride,
  The witches at his heel.

The running wave
They might not brave,
  The living stream they hate,
Across the wiel,
Where all is still
  As death, they ride in state.

Across the plain,
With might and main,
  They rush to seize Knocksheen,
Right up the hill,
With furious will,
  To glut a murderous spleen.

Fast rode the steed,
Was born for need,
  And the hour of peril dire ;
By howe and scar
It led the war,
  And from the rock struck fire

As through shady skies
A white cloud flies
  Before the driving gale,

So ran the steed
In the hour of need,
  Foam-white as the milkmaid's pail.

Now hurry fast,
Woe-worth the last,
  Let all be at the death!
The Fiends cried out,
With a gruesome shout
  Made echo hold her breath.

On, on they rush,
With vengeance flush,
  Like a flood o'er bank and brae;
With fearful speed
They press on the steed,
  That foams like the driven spray.

Knocksheen! Knocksneen!
There's naught between
  Thy heart and judgment now;
Thy guilt is great,
To awesome fate
  Thou must prepare to bow!

O dreadful hour
When death doth lower
  With the eyes of hell on me!
So short a space,
And wild the race
  To woe from revelry!

The drinker's doom
Portendeth gloom,
  Where yet the fire doth burn!
Who truth doth scorn,
Will folly mourn
  When all too late to turn!

With crowding feet
The witches fleet
  The flying steed outran.
One led the way
To seize the prey,
  And feed the greedy clan.

With yell and roar
She sprang before,
  And aimed a fearsome whack;
Short fell the stroke,
On the steed it broke,
  And singed the white to black.

The witch's hand.
Like a burning brand,
  Made the charger spring from earth,
With a desperate bound,
Like the deer from hound,
  And life from the jaws of death.

Though spurred by fear,
Hope and despair,
  To 'scape this fiendish swarm,

The steed must fail,
As by the sail
The mast breaks in the storm.

On the mountain ridge,
As on a bridge,
The Laird drew up and stood,
Like a seaman lorn
On a rock wave-worn
While the tide rose up in flood.

They swept around,
Would his soul confound ;
Like the deer at bay he stood ;
With his sword he drew
A circle true,
And defied the growling brood.

In the highest name
That the tongue can frame,
The help of heaven he craved,
While with horrid scowl,
And fearful howl,
The fiends around him raved.

They thundered round,
They shook the ground,
Their eyes lit up the gloom
With glowing fires,
And fell desires,
To hell Knocksheen would doom.

On guard he stood
Against the flood,
  And hideous forms in air ;
He longed for day,
To heaven did pray
  To save him from despair.

A watch so long,
A foe so strong,
  He never knew before ;
Nor what affright
For guilty sprite
  Is in the final hour !

His cry arose
To Him that knows
  Who fainteth in the course.
Help came from heaven
To heart sore riven
  With anguish and remorse.

When dawn bloomed red,
And radiance shed
  Afar o'er moor and fell,
The monsters dread
In the shadows fled,
  And slunk away to hell.

Then saw Knocksheen
The dew-sprent green,
  And the wild thyme in the sun,

The spreading flock
By howe and rock,
  And the lambkins dance and run.

The bridle rein
He shook again,
  His faithful steed sped on,
On happier pair,
Or scene so fair,
  The sun has never shone!

Adown the brae,
With rising day,
  He entered Garroch Glen,
Where wood and wave
Rare music gave,
  The happiest of men.

He sought his home,
No more to roam
  In search of hollow bliss,
But spent his days
Upon the braes,
  Where simple pleasures please.

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICÈ.

IN days of yore when time was young,
  Ere Homer sung his story,
That o'er the world enchantment flung
  And covered Greece with glory;

Then Orpheus was a harper gay,
  Who loved and was belovèd,
And through the fields and woods did stray,
  And sang as he was movèd.

Eurydicè his love did share,
  They went in joy together,
He sang his transports into air,
  And wandered any whither.

He sang a sweet and melting strain,
  The ear of earth did capture,
And heaven heard the rare refrain
  With an admiring rapture.

And as he passed the woodlands through
  The songsters fluttered round him,
All living things to him he drew,
  With cords unseen he bound them.

Now when his song went into air
  The birds took up each stanza,
And with his gladness soothed their care,
  Or sang extravaganza.

They lost their native tongue and stole
  The fragments of his canto ;
No native music could they thole,
  But flew off with his ranto.

The cattle and the sheep grew dumb,
  And wondered at the gladness,
A thing so strange to world so glum,
  Nor knew it was not madness.

He charmed the fishes of the sea,
The mermaid rose from ocean,
And bore him o'er the waste with glee
And ardour of devotion.

'Twas thus she pled, O Orpheus come
With me into the valley,
Far down within my sea-green home,
Our life from death to rally!

Thy music will awake the dead,
And charm the moaning billow,
O come with me ere life be sped,
And share my lonely pillow!

I have a love, a fair young love,
I never may forsake O,
Eurydicè, my only dove,
My music is her echo.

The mermaid left him on the shore,
And with a sigh she glided
Beneath the foam of breakers hoar,
Sore grieved at what betided.

But when the tide went out to sea
It heard the mermaid's sorrow,
And wondered what that grief might be
From which its own might borrow.

O mermaid queen! what trouble moves
Thy breast with thought distressing?
For thine are all the sea-green groves,
And waves thy feet caressing.

She spoke of Orpheus, all her care,
Her love that would enjoy him,
But for Eurydicè the fair,
Whose pleasure did employ him.

Now Orpheus was a happy man
As ever fortune pleasured,
Yet was his joy a narrow span
As things on earth are measured.

It was upon an afternoon,
The sunshine on the mountain,
When days were long and warm in June,
And sweet the silver fountain,

When in a cot of roses red,
And honeysuckle twining,
Where briers sweet their fragrance shed,
For joy their all combining,

Eurydicè with longing stood,
Within the door-way narrow,
And thought that loitering time was rude
And loath to bring her marrow.

The sea came fondly on the bay,
And broke in ripples, saying,
Eurydicè! come here to-day,
And bathe where I am playing.

She lightly stepped amid the flowers,
Inhaled their fragrant blossom,
And wandered through the woodland bowers,
To bathe in ocean's bosom.

She flang herself upon the wave,
And swam upon the billow,
Eurydicè! O thee I'll have,
Sleep thou upon my pillow!

He drew her o'er the sea-weed brown,
And through the knotted tangle,
And dead men's ropes, that he might drown
The life they sought to strangle.

In vain she swam, in vain she strove,
His eager arms embraced her,
A thousand waves behind her drove,
That wreathing kissed and chased her.

Just then came Orpheus sailing past,
In haste like any lover;
One look upon his face she cast,
One cry, and all was over.

She sank full many fathom deep,
A depth no diver soundeth;
She fell into a dreamless sleep
No tempest ere confoundeth.

Now Orpheus dived and swam around,
And cried with utter anger,
As if stern death he could astound,
And make him yield to clangour.

Eurydicè no answer gave
From out the cruel hollow;
Deep in the ocean was her grave,
What love could ever follow?

He climbed into his dreary boat,
And spread the sail with sorrow,
And bade her drive to any spot,
For him was no to-morrow.

The wind blew fair and drove her on,
Upon the shore she grounded,
Within a creek but too well known
For love so soon confounded.

He saw the cottage by the sea,
The roses o'er the lintel,
But no fair face of loving glee
To welcome home her minstrel.

He entered in and saw the room
Bedecked with love's invention,
With all the grace of summer bloom,
And charm of kind intention.

Upon the wall a garland hung
Of roses and sweet brier,
Her fingers lately plucked and flung
Around her lover's lyre.

And as she graced the magic lyre,
She dreamed of songs of gladness,
And strains of rare and sacred fire,
Like joy redeemed from sadness.

Ah, little thought she of the tale
That silent lyre did treasure,
What face it was behind the vail
That wore the mask of pleasure!

Eurydicè, so late his bliss,
That of his soul made capture,
And made him dream that heaven was his,
Its glory and its rapture,

Fell death surprised with rigour keen,
And bore to his dark dwelling ;
The thought of joy that might have been
Is pain beyond the telling !

He took the lyre into his hand,
Went forth with it in sorrow,
Till every breeze in all the land
Did of his passion borrow.

The valley listened with her streams,
Her tears did flood the fountain,
While echo, wakened from her dreams,
Ran weeping through the mountain.

Dumb grew the earth with heavy grief,
And dark the face of heaven,
While time ran on, and no relief
By Spring herself was given.

The mavis had forgot her song,
Once warbled at the dawning ;
No nightingale the dark did throng
With prophecies of morning.

The cuckoo heard in fir woods green,
'Tween sounds of water falling,
Where Spring with flowers has decked the scene,
To joy all nature calling,

Has lost her song, and dumb doth fly
  Afar o'er hill and hollow ;
Nor lark may warble in the sky
  As days in silence follow.

Thus sky and earth has Orpheus drawn
  Within his Maelstrom anguish,
As if they owned his tale alone
  Would all resistance vanquish.

But why entreat their helpless love
  To yield him back his treasure ?
Let him descend, and seek to move
  Hell's king unto his pleasure !

He sought the sea where meeting tides
  Strike hard and roar and whirl,
Where death the wrecks of mortals hides
  Within a nether world.

The sun arose upon the sea
  With strange unearthly glamour,
The scene was fair as fair could be,
  The voice but hungry clamour.

The sunshine struck upon the lyre,
  It thrilled to tell its story
Unto the orb of glowing fire,
  That crowns dark hills with glory.

But day has not within his hold
  The treasure he would ransom ;
The arms of darkness now enfold
  His love, so young and handsome !

He plunges down into the waves,
No terrors will he eschew,
Of fathoms thousands ten he braves,
Eurydicè to rescue.

The gruesome monsters in amaze,
Transfixed with greedy wonder,
Did ope their jaws and grimly gaze,
Then gurgled hideous thunder.

Sucked down within the rushing throe
Of death's deep throat of terror,
The wrecks of life his passage strew
With forms of growing horror.

As bullet in a rifle gun
Within the tube doth swirl,
And straight into the day is spun
With speed and awesome birl ;

So through death's throat did Orpheus haste,
Its fearful din and rattle,
Into a wide yet dingy waste,
With terrors new to battle.

Borne through the air as one on wing,
O'er desert lone and dreary,
Upon a bank before the king
Of hell he lighted eerie.

The ashes of a growling fire
Lay 'neath his panting bosom,
The work of some volcano dire,
With gashes deep and ruesome.

As cliffs around a curving bay
O'erlook the sand and ocean,
And, hearing what the waters say,
Still echo the commotion ;

So stood the rocks around this shore,
The guardians of its sorrow,
That echoed back the whirlpool's roar,
And still from grief would borrow.

Upon a rock before the cliff,
His queen beside him seated,
Fell Pluto sat, full grim and stiff,
And fate to spirits meted.

Sped through the pass of hungry death,
Like deer before the hunter,
Light as the vail of hoary breath
Of him who toils in winter.

The spirits came upon the wind,
And paused within the shadow
Of Pluto's throne, their lot to find
In his broad, gloomy meadow.

To right and left he parts the shades,
As rock divides the river ;
They enter undiscovered glades,
To wander there forever.

Now Orpheus stood before the king,
Athirst to tell his anguish,
His hand afire to touch the string
Wherewith he fain would vanquish.

Thou king of all the dead! reverèd power!
Now seated with thy queen on royal throne,
From thy broad meadows let me pluck a flower
Once grew on earth, and then was all my own!

It is not much to thee, whose wide domain
Is graced with all the bloom of ages past,
But worlds to me its beauty to regain,
And with its fragrance scent time's fleeting blast.

O give me back my love! she died so young,
So fair and full of promise unto me!
And then your praise will live on every tongue
That haunts the fields where fame and pleasure be.

Thou hast not yet forgot that summer day,
When, wandering all alone amidst the flowers,
Where bees were gathering honey on the brae,
And treasured sweetness 'gainst the winter hours,

Thou did'st discover fair Persephonè,
And bore her off, the sweetest flower e'er grew
Within the compass of the orb of day,
A flower most fair when wet with pity's dew.

Thy gain was loss to earth she still doth mourn,
Her ravished meads lament the glory fled;
Thy blossoms keep! let mine to earth return!
And life will whisper gladness to the dead.

When Ceres, mother to thy lovely queen,
Besought thee that her daughter might return
To haunts of day and valleys cool and green,
With tender pity did thy bosom burn.

Thou did'st forego thy power to keep her here,
And gave her leave her mother's home to see,
The brightest months that crown the passing year,
Her summer spent above, apart from thee.

Warm beats the heart within thy iron frame,
When thou dost yield thy bridal queen to earth,
To soothe a mother's grief, thy passion tame
For this, thy lady fair of untold worth!

Eurydicè to thee is but a shade,
A thing of naught, but all the world to me;
Give me my love who pines in this dark glade!
And grateful hearts will bless thee with their glee.

We will remember thee when all alone
Thou dwellest deep in thy dark winter time,
When thy Persephonè to earth is gone,
To gather flowers and smell the sweet wild thyme,

Then will we seek an arbour cool and deep,
A cavern that hath ears and echo's tongue;
There will we sing to thee, and sing asleep
The sorrow that so oft thy breast hath wrung.

Thy soul will fall into a trance, and dream
Of wanderings on the earth in ancient hours,
And thou wilt haunt the mountain and the stream,
To find Persephonè among the flowers.

Twas thus he spoke, and then he touched the lyre,
As from the strings his fingers music won,
That cooled the flame of woe's eternal fire,
Till souls enjoyed it as the gentle sun.

From passes in the cliff that led away
To valleys deep and deserts wide and drear,
The trooping ghosts came on, to hear the lay
That drew from Pluto's eyes the burning tear.

Nor tearless was his queen, while pity spoke
Within her hazel eye and heaving breast,
As waters startled from a smitten rock
Salt tears flowed fast that had been long at rest.

The yells of tumult and the moans of pain,
The groans of horror and of fell despair
Grew still ; and as an ear upon the strain
Grim Hades heard the melting Lydian air !

The mountains of their sorrow passed away,
As clouds in haste from face of silver moon ;
To long benighted eyes it seems like day,
Till darkness comes again and night winds croon.

Borne on the wings of melody sublime,
Each soul takes flight and flies afar from grief
To realms of dewy morn, that happy clime
Where life is young and woods put on the leaf!

They hear by turns a thousand minstrels' lays,
Of wood and sky on hills and vales they knew,
Till every soul in dreaming fancy strays,
A child in fields and groves where cries cuckoo.

But when the swaying strain has reached a close,
They look around with sorrow and affray ;
Fast fall the tears on their reviving woes,
And dark is night for those who fall from day!

While wiping off the tear with horny hand,
The king of Hades spoke to Orpheus thus:
For that rare strain regain thy native land
With thy Eurydicè, and think of us!

Thy upward steps Eurydicè will trace,
And follow softly to the realms above;
Turn not behind to look upon her face
Ere day be gained, or thou wilt lose thy love!

Behind the throne a secret passage led,
A tortuous course up to the light of day,
The same that Pluto traced as up he sped
To find his queen among the flowers of May.

He showed the path, then called Eurydicè
From forth the crowd, a wan and trembling sprite,
That shivering came, and wondered what might be,
No thought of joy, but only more affright.

Behold! thy Orpheus with his lyre has won
Escape for thee from death's dark gloomy strath,
If he can journey till he see the sun,
Nor turn to view thee on the dingy path.

Eurydicè beholds her lover's face,
And scarce refrains from hasting to his breast;
Then both bow low, and own the wondrous grace
Of Pluto and his queen to souls distrest.

In single file they go through passage dark,
As pilgrims up a tower on winding stair,
To reach the battlements, and morning mark,
While birds awake with song the balmy air.

In haste with palpitating hearts they climb,
As Orpheus leads the way to realms above ;
They think of former days, that happy time
When life's fair bower was green and kept by love.

Fond, fond was hope, and filled the cup anew,
That death had spilt on sand and ashes gray,
As then in thought they saw the fields of dew
In silver sparkle 'neath the eye of day.

Through darkness dense they go in silence all,
Afar from hell, afar from earth's green sod,
Where all is dumb, and echo doth not call,
Nor any voice to cheer the longsome road !

Then Orpheus fain had halted by the way,
And turned around with looks of tender grace,
But for the doom foretold, to lose for aye
The joy of love for one glimpse of her face.

So, girding up his loins, he travelled on,
Through halls of silence deeming toil but brief,
Lest love impatient prove a love undone,
And stolen sweetness purchase lasting grief.

Nor would he speak, for speech might catch the eye,
And turn him round to see departing bliss,
But all alone he sought the day-lit sky,
Eurydicè to find and claim as his.

At length they near the confines of the earth
The feet of hunters thunder on the sod,
The horn sounds gaily for the sons of mirth,
And daybreak reddens on the landscape broad.

The pathway opens to his eager sight,
  While morn is ruddy on the purple hill,
The antlered deer speeds past in bounding flight,
  And murmurs of the streams the valley fill.

Nay more, he sees the bower, his lovesick bower,
  With roses blooming in the sacred grove,
The honey-suckle o'er the lintel flower,
  The open door-way for the feet of love.

Few were the steps between him and the green,
  As reason lost the reins, and love in haste
Turned round and said, Behold our native scene,
  That bids us welcome from the dreary waste!

And lo! the face of his beloved he saw,
  Reproach and woe consuming new-born joy!
The bliss that will not wait upon the law
  Fell vengeance, overtaking, doth destroy!

One look she cast on Orpheus and the day,
  A waving hand, a shriek, and then was gone,
Mid echoes of the night, away! away!
  Forever banished from the gladsome dawn!

GLOAMIN' ON THE MOLLOCH.

A GENTLE air blows o'er the Ken,
  Has travelled o'er the darksome hills,
Where from the moss and springy fen
  The Dee its rugged channel fills.

In Grennan wood, with whisper low
It bids the daffodils arise,
And oaks that long have ceased to grow
Yet feel the hope of summer skies.

Beneath their naked boughs the lambs
Have ended gambols in the sun,
And in the flanks of fleecy dams
Seek cordial good when day is done.

In dimples on the Molloch's breast
The primrose flowers its dimpled plaid,
While high in heaven the moon's pale crest
Leads on the shades that day invade.

The dusky broom still darker turns,
And dim become the golden whins,
While thicker shadows hide the burns,
And vail the foam of sounding linns.

A while ago above Dalry
The smoke in azure pillars rose,
To sink and vanish from the sky,
The sport of every wind that blows.

An image of the lives of men,
Aspiring high to seek the light,
By counter breeze still swept amain
From daylit sky to gloomy night.

Now all unseen the village sleeps
Above the murmur of the Ken,
The smoke into the shadows creeps,
Nor ever sees the fire again.

The rear of day has left Millyea,
And on Corse Rhine the daring snow
No longer keeps the night at bay,
But sheathes in gloom a silver glow.

The dew is on the blades of grass,
And slumber on the eyes of men,
In watches few the night will pass,
And life will meet with day again.

SPRING.

'TWAS in the month of April sweet,
When fields were sown with corn,
I strayed by Ken with wandering feet,
Beneath the eye of morn.

I saw the woods of Earlston,
Well thrashed by winter's flail,
Save here and there the verdant cone
Of fir tree strong and hale.

Upon a brae that faced the west
There stood the old oak tree,
No sign of bloom was on his crest,
Nor voice of melody.

For centuries have breathed on him,
Their love and rage have spent ;
No wonder he is crank and grim,
Frost-bitten like the bent.

When in his prime he shadow threw
Across an acre wide ;
A fairer tree, I trow, ne'er grew
In all the country side.

But time and storm have broke away
His branches great and strong,
Where night in summer shadow lay,
And slept the whole day long.

When persecutors thirsted keen
To drink the Gordon's blood,
He lay within the oaken screen,
And heard the whispering wood.

He heard the thunder of the linn,
Where Ken fell o'er the rocks,
And over all the moaning din
The bleating lambs and flocks.

And now and then a mavis sang,
In heaven itself I wis,
Through wood and heart the music rang,
The echo of its bliss.

A stillness falls upon the wood,
The voice of joy is dumb,
As o'er the sod with heavy thud
The hoofs of troopers come.

They scour the wood with eager glance,
Hyænas after prey,
Beneath the oak they curse and prance,
The tree will not betray.

Within its shield he rests secure,
Death near must hurry past,
Till Bothwell Brig his life is sure,
But there must fall at last.

Since then have struck a thousand storms
Upon his branchy head ;
The joys of life and death's alarms
Their various bloom have shed.

Although his crest yet lacketh bloom,
In summer 'twill be shown,
And human youth to age will come
Full oft ere he is gone.

I passed the castle rent and frail,
With ivy-garland bound,
And yew trees darkly green and hale,
Upon the restful ground,

Until, upon the banks of Ken,
I saw his foaming wave
Leap o'er the rocks into a den
Of darkness like the grave.

Above, the waves are broken sore,
With foam and thunder clad,
Where waters unto waters roar,
And drive as they were mad.

But soon as o'er the rock they go,
They sink in silence deep,
And darkness, where they travel slow,
And all their secrets keep.

I sat me down upon the brae,
Where bloomed the primrose fair,
And heard the curlew's ringing lay
Traverse the fields of air.

As waters came and waters went,
And sounded evermore,
While Spring winds breathed upon the bent,
And wiled the tender flower,

I mused awhile, till thought and sight
Framed phantoms in the air,
Where things that be with fancy dight
Put on apparel fair.

While thus I sat in pensive mood
Upon the primrose brae,
And heard the mavis in the wood,
And saw the lambkins play,

Methought I saw come up the stream
A fairy form of air,
Across her breast a rainbow gleam
Lit up her golden hair.

Her face was lovely as the dawn
That blossoms through a cloud,
And smiles upon the dewy lawn
When larks are singing cloud.

The snow-drop and the crocus bloom
Were budding on her breast ;
With such a bride who should be groom,
I trow, might well be blest !

Upon her steps the primrose sprang,
Flowers busked her ankles small,
The cuckoo's note through woodlands rang,
And tempted echo's call.

The gray sauch budded into gold
That felt her kirtle green,
The larch trees did their bloom unfold
At passing of this queen.

Her step was fleet, and blithe her face,
While, with a laughing lip,
She up the Ken her path did trace,
With gambol and with skip.

She passed between me and the stream,
But turned a smiling eye,
And said, awake thee from thy dream!
Employ the hours that fly!

I hasten to the shady north
With voice of song and flowers,
I give to life its joy and worth,
And cover naked bowers.

Then from her lap she filled her hand
With rose and daffodil,
Such flowers as came at her command
To deck each glen and hill.

With that I said, a boon sweet Spring!
I crave of thee this day!
Thy voice will in my memory ring
When thou art far away.

For years I felt thee in my heart,
With me the whole year round,
But now I fear thou wilt depart
Beyond or sight or sound.

She placed the posy in my hand,
Her breath was on my face,
A kiss so sweet, a smile so bland
Could after time efface?

With that she rose and made to go,
The while she said adieu,
Full many must my favours know
Ere I return to you.

Farewell! Sweet Spring! if thou must go,
And hasten back again!
To melt the frost and wreaths of snow
That come in winter's train.

Away she sped, like mists that rise
Before the sun and wind,
Until they vanish in the skies,
And leave no trace behind.

Away she sped, like roe-deer fleet,
That hastens up the glen,
And scorns the pace of hunter's feet,
And shouts of eager men.

Light was her step as up the stream
She sang and lilted gay,
I then awoke, and with my dream
The fair form fled away!

BEN-Y VRACKIE.

THE sun shone bright, the sky was clear,
And the farmer drove his wain,
Through fields of stooks with joyous cheer,
And stacked the golden grain,

As up the Tay I travelled fast,
From Perth to Pitlochrie,
On a steed of fire that hurried past
Each glimpse of hill and tree.

The Sun had gone a little west
Down from his noon-day throne,
When I made for Ben-y-Vrackie's crest,
Through wood and moor alone.

I passed through Moulin, hamlet coy,
In a dimple of the brae,
Embowered with wood, where secret joy
Might dream the live-long day.

A water warbles in its ear,
And sweetly singeth, Hark ye!
My wave is gay and sparkles clear,
I come from Ben-y-Vrackie.

The spotted mountain is my home,
Be-decked with wells and heather,
With wreathes of snow where white hares roam,
And berries like Balquhidder.

Upon its bank I upward sped,
'Neath rowan red and hazel,
The fir tree tall and oak outspread,
And the birch's yellow tassel.

The stream behind and its waiting wood,
I cross the purple moor,
Be-strewn with boulders gray and rude,
That long time may endure.

Anon I climb its rugged breast,
'Mid flecks of silver snow,
And from its bare and pointed crest
See regions wide below.

A little distance to the north
Were the hills of Ben-y-Gloe,
With brown and gray were they decked forth
And a vail of new-born snow.

Afar beyond were the Cairngorms gray,
And the peak of Lochnagar,
Where the wells of Dee with the shadows play
Of the great Bens of Braemar.

As to the east mine eye doth stray,
The Law of Bold Dundee
Uprears its head above the Tay,
As it goes to meet the sea.

Across the Tay stand Norman Law,
The Lomond hills and Largo,
And o'er the Forth in bluish gray
With clouds the Pentlands argue.

The broad-backed Ochils slumber deep,
In the bosom of the day,
And the Abruchil hills in their wrinkles keep
The deer through Glenartney stray.

Still veering round, Ben Chonzie there,
Stands o'er Loch Turrit lone,
Ben Voirlich o'er Loch Earn so fair,
And southward Stuch-a-chroan.

The muckle Bin on Campsie fell,
Beyond Gargunnock table,
Ben Ledi and Ben Lomond tell
Truth distant seems a fable.

Ben Lawers grand with mighty towers
Keeps guard on deep Loch Tay,
And throws his shadow on the hours
That through Glen Lyon stray.

Above Loch Dochart stands Ben More,
Stobinain* o'er Balquhidder,
Schiehallion in his armour hoar
Above the Rannoch heather.

Be-south the mountains of Glencoe
Ben Cruachan stands fast,
Where darksome waters of Loch Awe
To Etive hurry past.

* Pronounce Stobīnyan.

Beyond Loch Lyddoch's sombre moor
  Rise mountains of Glencoe,
Where darkness may the day endure,
  The sunshine and the snow.

O'er Athol wilds Ben Dearig shone,
  Where strong men toss the caber,
While great Ben Nevis on his throne
  Loomed high o'er dim Lochaber.

Afar and varied was the view,
  Both clear and dim I trow,
Of mountains long ago I knew
  When the dawn was on my brow.

For years on years long lost to sight,
  Through mist their heads appear,
Old friends well met in broad day-light
  From former times bring cheer.

And happy he who climbs at last
  A mount that says, What lack ye?
Look round and find! yea, hold it fast!
  As this same Ben-y-Vrackie.

Thrice happy who to heaven doth rise,
  Friends near and far around,
Sees from his Tabor in the skies
  At last the long lost found!